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No. Practical G. W.

DISCOURSES

UPON THE

Morality

f. OF THE *New Testament*

G O S P E L.

PART II.

Printed MDCC.



T H E

P R E F A C E.

WHen I first publish'd a small parcel of these Practical Discourses, I declared that Morality was my Business, and that if any Controversie hapned to lye fairly in my Way, I would as fairly pass it by, without taking any Notice of it. My Design is the same in these; in which I have so closely follow'd the same Method, and so religiously observ'd it, that, even when I am discoursing of

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the Trinity in which we are Baptiz'd, I have much ado to overcome myself so far, as to answer the Common Objection against it: And have no sooner done it, but I presently beg Pardon for it, and endeavour to shew, as plainly as the Matter will bear, that all our Best and most Divine Morality is chiefly groundd in the Truth and the Belief of it.

I do not now excuse myself, as formerly I did, upon the Score of Blind Obedience. I have some little Reason, of my own, for what I do; and tho' it be but little, 'tis better than none at all. When People either have no Reason of their own, or else have
none

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none which they dare venture to rely upon, 'tis no great Wonder, if Advice takes place; where Reason leaves it vacant. A bad Shift is better than none; and he that cannot see, or sees so dimly that he dares not trust his Sight, must be contented to be led. (a) 'Tis only when we are uneasie and perplex, when we find our selves at a Loss, and know not how to satisfy our Mind about the Matter before us, when we want the help of Good Advice, and are glad with all our Hearts to ask it; then

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(a) *Blind Obedience*, ch. 9. pag. 81.
Edit. 1. p. 71. Ed. 2.

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it is, and only then, we have recourse to Blind Obedience.

I remember to have read in Archbishop Tillotson, (b) That the Case of Melancholly (which is only a more general Word for Scrupulosity) is not a reasonable Case, and therefore does not fall under any certain Rules and Directions. They who are under the Power of it, are seldom fit to take that Counsel which alone is fit to be given them, and that is, not to believe themselves concerning themselves, but to trust the Judgment of others rather than their own
Appre-

(b) Vol. 2. Sermon. 7.

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Apprehensions. In other Cases every Man knows himself best, but a Melancholy Man is most in the Dark as to himself. This Cause of trouble and doubting is very much to be pitied, but hard to be removed, unless by Physick, or by Time, or by Chance.

And is this all? Are these the only Comforts which can be found for Scrupulous Persons? Physick? Time? And Chance? I could not possibly prevail with my self to be so very ill-natur'd, as to leave them thus in the Lurch. And this was the only Reason why I took some Pains to write a little Tract concerning

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Blind Obedience, *in which I have fully treated this Matter, and searcht the Foundation of it. Without endeavouring to lay down any certain Rules or Directions for particular Occurrences, I have made it my whole Business, partly to divert their Melancholy, and chiefly to convince their Scrupulosity, that they may boldly take that Counsel which alone is fit to be given them, and may securely trust the Judgment of others, rather than their own Apprehensions. I own, 'tis no great Mark of Courage, in a Christian Souldier, to Wink and Fight; but however, when People are of such*

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*a cowardly Temper, that they
dare not look their Enemies
in the Face, they had better
wink and do something, than
run away and do nothing.*

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Pra-

PRACTICAL
DISCOURSES
UPON THE
Morality
OF THE
G O S P E L.

PART II.

Discourse I.

*Of the Trinity, and the Usefulness
of Believing it.*

JESUS said to his Disciples,
all Power is given unto me in
Heaven and in Earth. Go there-
fore,

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fore, and Teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have Commanded you: And behold, I am with you always, even unto the End of the World. Matth. 28. v. 18, 19, 20.

In Discourſing upon this Goſpel, I ſhall Conſider, 1. The Doctrine of the Trinity, and what we are to believe concerning it; 2. The Importance of this Doctrine, and what Uſe we ought to make of it.

I.

There's nothing more certain than the Unity of God. Our Natural Reason teaches it; and Holy Scripture confirms it. In the Old Teſtament we read, (a) *O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one.* And

(a) *Deut. 6. 4.*

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And in the New we find, (b) *One Lord, one Faith, one God.* This Doctrine is the Basis and Foundation of all Christianity. A Christian would be no better than a Heathen, if he offer'd to deny it.

If this were all, our Faith would meet with little difficulty and find but very few to oppose it. But the Scripture does not stop here. It also Teaches us, that (c) *There are Three in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and that these Three are One.* They are *Three*, and they are *One*. They are *Three Persons*, and *One God*. In a word, They are *Three* in one Sense, and only *One* in another: And because they are not in the same Sense *Three* and *One*, there appears no contradiction in it. It may be true, for any thing we know: The Scripture says it *is* so

(b) *Eph. 4. 5, 6.* (c) *1 John 5. 7.*

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so : And there needs no plainer Proof to satisfy us that it is our Duty to believe it.

But all this will not satisfy some People, who have an unaccountable Prejudice against it. They Object that the Scripture only says, *There are Three*, which are one : It does not say, that that these *Three* are *Persons*. I own the Scripture does not call them *Persons* : But however, it calls them *Three* : And since we know no better Name for them, I see no Reason why we may not allow the Catholick Church to call them *Persons*.

Let us only Consider the common Use of the Word *Person*, and we shall soon discover that it is the best and fittest for our present purpose. For my own part, I see no reason to the contrary, but that Brute Animals and Plants, or any other Inferior Subsistent Beings, might have been call'd *Persons* (as really they

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they are in the Principal Sense of the Word) as well as either Men or Angels. But Custom will have it otherwise: And Custom being the only Law in these Cases, there's nothing to be said against it. A Private Man's Fancy must submit to the Publick Use and Common Way of speaking. If the rest of the World would please to approve it, I could like very well to give the Name of *Person* to any Subsistent Being, though never so mean and abject. But it seems this Word is, by the General Practice, become a Mark of Distinction, and only is allowed to those *Subsistent Beings* which are of a higher Rank and greater Quality, I mean those *Noble Beings* which are not only *Subsistent* but *Intelligent*. And hence it comes to pass, that when we talk of *Men* or *Angels*, we discourse of them, as of so many *Persons*: And by the same Rule,

Rule, when we speak of God, who is most perfectly *Subsistent*, and most perfectly *Intelligent*, we must needs allow the *Divine Persons* to be the most perfect and most excellent *Persons* of all.

Having thus consider'd the Common Use of the Word, let also reflect a little how the Scripture directs us to speak in this Matter, and it will still appear more plain, that the *Three*, which *are in Heaven*, are each of them in the true and proper Sense, a *Divine Person*. Is it not plain in Scripture, that these *Three* are called *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*? And what do we commonly understand by a *Father*, but a *Person* who has a *Son*? Or what do we usually mean by a *Son*, but a *Person* who has a *Father*? So far, I presume, we are easily satisfied, because we keep within the compass of our ordinary Ideas. We
daily

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daily meet with *Fathers* and *Sons*, and we verily believe there is no harm in taking them for so many *Persons*. But when we Enquire about the *Holy Ghost*, our Thoughts are got into a Region of Spirits, where we have little or no Acquaintance. Yet nevertheless we doubt not but Angels are *Persons*, as well as we are. And I am very sure, that, if a created *Spirit* be a created *Person*, we have all the reason in the World to believe that an increated *Spirit*, such as the *Holy Ghost* is represented to us, must needs be a *Divine Person*. We read in Scripture, not only that (d) *God in the beginning created Heaven and Earth*; but also that (e) *by the Word of the Lord the Heavens were made*; (f) *All things were made by him*; (g) *In the beginning was the Word*,

(d) Gen. 1. 1. (e) Psal. 33. 6. (f) Joh. 1. 3. (g) ib. v. 1.

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Word, and the Word was God. So that we are all bound to believe the one as much as the other; not only that the *Father* is *God Almighty Maker of Heaven and Earth*, but that the *Word* or *Son of God* is equally *God*, equally *Almighty*, and equally *Maker of all things*. Moreover we read in Scripture, how *St. Peter* speaking of the *Holy Ghost*, (b) calls him *God*. *St. Paul* discoursing likewise of the (i) *same Holy Spirit*, calls him *The same Lord*, and *the same God*, which works all in all. He adds, that (k) *by this One*, and the self same *Spirit*, we are *Baptized into one Body*; that is, we are all received into the *Body of the Church*, and are made *Members of it* by being *Baptized*, upon equal Terms, in the *Name of the Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the

(b) *Acts* 5. 3, 4. (i) *1 Cor.* 12. 4, 5, 6. (k) *ib.* v. 11.

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the Holy Ghost ; who though he is mentioned last, because he really proceeds from both of them, yet nevertheless is the *same Lord, the same God, and the self-same Spirit* with them.

To Sum up all this in a few words : A Humane Person is One that has the Nature of a Man ; an Angelical Person, is One that has the Nature of an Angel ; a Divine Person, is One that has the Nature of God. Since therefore we find in Scripture, that the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* have, each of them, the Divine Nature ; we conclude they are each of them a *Divine Person* : And since the Scripture plainly teaches, that they are *Three*, and not three Gods ; we believe they are *Three Divine Persons* and only *One God*.

The main Difficulty of this Mystery lyes within a little Compass. We are apt to conclude that, if there is but *One Nature*,
there

there is only *One Person*; or if there be *Three Persons*, there must needs be *Three Natures*. The first Way is downright *Sabellianism*; a real *Unity*, without any real *Trinity*: The second is plain *Tritheism*; a real *Trinity*, without any real *Unity*: And the middle Way, betwixt these two, is the Orthodox Doctrine, which teaches us to believe *One God* and *Three Persons*, *One Nature* and *Three Subsistences*, an *Absolute Unity* and *Relative Trinity* together. And that this implies no Contradiction in it, will easily appear to those who please to consider, that there are not any Notions more widely different from each other than those of *Absolute* and *Relative*; and that therefore no *Trinity*, which is purely *Relative*, can ever be able to divide an *Absolute Unity*.

But still the Old Objection returns. It is impossible for *Three Hu-*

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Humane Persons to be *One Man*; and therefore it is impossible for *Three Divine Persons* to be *One God*. In answer to this, I frankly own that *Three Humane Persons*, such as God has made us, cannot possibly be *One Man*. Their *Natures* are divided, and their *Substances* are separated: They neither have *One Nature*, nor any thing else that is really *one* and the *same*: And therefore 'tis no wonder that they cannot be *one* and the *same Man*. If the Catholic Church had ever taught such things concerning the *Trinity* of the *Divine Persons*, then indeed I should have been convinced that such a *Trinity* would have been as inconsistent with the *Unity* of *One God*, as *Three Humane Persons* are irreconcilable with the *Unity* of *One Man*. But the Church has never told us any thing like it. On the contrary it has always made us understand that there is but *one* indivisible

Di-

Divine Nature or *Substance*, and that the *Three Divine Persons* are distinguisht only by *Three Relative Properties* of *Subsisting*, which are essentially incommunicable to each other. So that, upon the whole Matter, I may justly Censure it as a very Wild and Extravagant Way of arguing, when People take upon them to prove, that because *Three Persons* (which are *Three Men*) cannot be *One Man*, therefore *Three Persons* (which are *not Three Gods*) cannot be *One God*.

In a Word, Three Humane Persons, are Three Individuals, and therefore Three Men : But Three Divine Persons cannot be Three Individuals, and therefore cannot be Three Gods. Mean time 'tis a wonderful thing to see how Fond we are of our Common Conceptions ; so unreasonably Fond of them, that all the Reason in the World can hardly perswade

perswade us to leave the beaten Road of our ordinary Ideas. We commonly take it for granted, that Three Men are so many Persons, and that Three Persons are so many Men; and truly so far we are in the right. But when we transfer these Notions, such as they are, with all their Imperfections, from Earth to Heaven, from Humane Persons to Divine, we are very Rash, and strangely in the Wrong. Pray, what Authority have we to say that there's no difference 'twixt God and Man? Betwixt Divine and Humane Persons? How do we know but that, in God, there may be another sort of Persons, which are *Real* and not *Individual*? In all finite Beings we know not how to conceive the *personal* Distinction of them, without the *Individual* Difference of Natures and Subsistences: But surely an Infinite Being may deserve an Exception from a Rule, which is only

only common to such Persons as are infinitely below it. Let us take it for granted, that no created Persons can be multiplied, unless their finite Natures are divided : What then ? Is it therefore evident that Three increated Persons cannot co-exist in One Infinite, Undivided, Substance ? Nothing is ever divided, but what is bounded : And therefore God's Nature being every way essentially Infinite Unlimited and Boundless, can never be divided. His *Immensify* is One and the Same in all differences of Place : His *Eternity* is One and the Same in all differences of Time, the Past, the Present, and the Future : And may not the Infinite Perfection of the *Divine Essence* be One and the Same in all the *Three Persons*, the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost* ? But still it runs in our Mind, that *Three Persons* are *Three Intelligent Substances* : And, among us Creatures, 'tis
very

very true ; because we are so many Individuals: But in God, 'tis certainly false ; because he is essentially one Undivided Substance, which, by Three Distinct Ways of subsisting, makes Three Distinct Persons ; not Three such as ours, but *Three* of a quite different Sort, no more like ours than God is like to us. It would be a hard Case indeed, if in God there must be no Persons but such as we please to allow him ; or if, unless the Divine Persons be like ours, they must be no Persons at all. Let us only consider, that *Subsistence* and *Intelligence* are the two Notions which make up the complex Idea of a *Person* ; and that, of these two, *Subsistence* is the Principal ; as appears by these two Observations. 1. That those who will not allow a Separated *Soul* to be call'd a *Person*, do not deny it this Name because it is not compleatly *Intelligent* ; but be-
B
cause,

cause, without the Body, it is not compleatly *Subsistent*. 2. That our Understanding consider'd as a Faculty or Property belonging to us, is a thing which no Man pretends to take for a *Person*; and the Reason is, because, altho' it be an *Intelligent Being*, it is not conceiv'd to be *Subsistent*. Let us only consider this, and we shall find, that though *Subsistence* be not a *Person*, yet a particular *Property* of *Subsisting* being added to an *Intelligent Nature*, is that which makes a particular *Person*: And therefore *Christ*, who has two *Natures*, is *One Person* only, because he has but *One* particular *Subsistence*; and *God*, whose *Nature* is but *One*, is really *Three Distinct Persons*, by having *Three Distinct Subsistences*.

The *Divine Subsistence* being thus diversified, is the Reason why the *Father* is not really the *Son*, and why the *Holy Ghost* is really

really distinguisht from the *Son* and *Father*. The *Eternal Father* subsists, as the *Original Being*, *Unbegotten*, and *not proceeding* from any other : And this is the incommunicable Property of his primitive Subsistence. The *Son* subsists, as the *Eternal Word*, *Begotten* in a Spiritual Manner by the *Eternal Mind*, *eternally proceeding* from it, perfectly *resembling* the whole Nature of it, and *comprehensively expressing* its Original Perfection all at once : And this is the incommunicable Property of his derivative Subsistence. The *Holy Ghost* subsists, as the *Eternal Love*, *eternally Proceeding* from the *Eternal Mind* and the *Eternal Word*, the *Father* and the *Son* : And this is the incommunicable Property of his doubly derivative Subsistence. Altho' the Truth of God's *Being*, the Truth of his *Knowledge*, and the Truth of his *Love*, are certainly One and the Same Undivided

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ded *Truth*; yet nevertheless true *Knowledge* naturally presupposes true *Being*, as the Principle from whence it proceeds; and true *Love* presupposing both, proceeds from each of them. And indeed we cannot say, with any Appearance of Reason, that God therefore *has* his *Being*, because he *knows* it; but therefore he *knows* it because he *has* it. Nor can we truly say, he either *has* it or *knows* it, because he *loves* it, but therefore he truly *loves* his *Being*, because he both *has* it and *knows* it. So far this Mystery is from contradicting any clear Ideas of our Reason, that, tho' we do not see distinctly how it comes to be so, we find it as hard a Matter to conceive distinctly how it should be otherwise.

II.

My God! What have I *done*!
Or rather, what have I been *doing*
all this while! My Zeal, I
fear, has led me beyond my Duty.
Such

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Such silly Creatures, and such Sinners as we are, how dare we offer thus to Gaze and Stare upon thy Infinite Majesty ! So bright an Object, if we look long at it, is enough to blind us : Nay, even the least and shortest Curiosity is enough to dazzle and confound us : And therefore Prostrate in Mind and Heart, with most profound Submission, I humbly beg thy Pardon for this Rash Attempt of prying thus into the Secrets of thy Glory ; and at the same time earnestly beg thy assistance to consider, as I ought, the Importance of this Doctrine, and the Use we are to make of it.

S. Hierom says, that (1) in the Traditional Creed which they receiv'd from the Apostles, the main Article was the Confession of the Trinity ; and that it was the Custom among them, for those who

B 3 prepar'd

(1) Epist. 61.

prepar'd themselves for Baptism, to be instructed for forty Days, in the Doctrine of the Trinity: A certain Sign that in those early Times, they thought no Doctrine more important or more useful. They lookt upon it as the main Article of their Creed: And before the Baptism of those who were of riper Years, they thought that forty Days were little enough to instruct them in the Doctrine of it. Our Saviour himself, after his Resurrection, was pleas'd to defer his Ascension, for no less than forty Days, to instruct his Apostles before he commanded them to Teach all Nations, and Baptize them. He came from Heaven to make himself (m) a Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole World. He Died, that we might Live; he Rose, that we might also Rise again;

again ; and being ready to ascend to Heaven, that we also might follow him, he thus declares the full Extent and the Authority of his Commission : *All Power*, says he, *is given to me in Heaven and in Earth.* As God, I had *all Power* from all Eternity ; as God and Man, I had the same from the first Moment of my Incarnation ; but as Redeemer of the World, which is the most endearing Title, I had it not, upon that dear account, till I had (n) *humbled my self unto Death, even the Death of the Cross, that at my Name each Knee might bow, and every Tongue confess that I am Lord of all things ;* I had it not, till I (o) *both died and rose again, that I might be the Lord both of the Dead and the Living.* But now *All Power belongs to me in Heaven and in Earth ;* I now

B 4

am

(n) Phil. 2. 8. (o) Rom. 14. 9.

am (p) *Head of the whole Church,*
 because I am *the Saviour of the Bo-*
dy; I now am Sovereign Lord of
 it, because I (q) *gave my self for*
it, that I might sanctifie and
cleanse it with washing of Water
by the Word of Life, and that I
might present it to my self a glo-
rious Church, not having Spot or
Wrinkle, or any such thing, but
Holy and without Blcmish: Go
 therefore, in the Name of him who
 has redeem'd all Nations, and by
 Redemption has made them all
 his own, Go now and teach them
 All, baptizing them in the Name
 of the Father, and of the Son, and
 of the Holy Ghost, and teach them
 also to observe all other things,
 whatsoever I have commanded you:
 Go boldly, and fear no Opposi-
 tion, which the *Flesh, the World,*
 or *Devil,* are able to make against
 you; I, to whom All Power is
 given both in Heaven and in
 Earth,

(p) *Eph. 5. 23.* (q) *ib. v. 25, 26, 27.*

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Earth, Behold, I my self am with you always, even unto the End of the World.

Great God of Heaven and Earth! And was it worth thy coming down from thy own Heaven to our miserable Earth, to *sanctifie* thy People, to *cleanse* them *with Water by the Word of Life*, and to instruct them in the Faith of thy Ever-blessed Trinity, in the Name of which they are baptized? My God! I cannot say 'twas worth thy coming. We were not worth Creating, and yet thou wast pleas'd to create us: We were much less worth Redeeming, and yet thou wouldst not forbear to redeem us. Alas! It was not for our sakes, but for thy own, that thou wast pleas'd to gratifie the Inclination of thy overflowing Bounty. Enrich with thy own Being, thou wouldst not suffer our Nothing to lye Eternally unregarded. Thy Wisdom saw us, thy Goodness

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pitied us, thy Power rais'd us, and thy Plenty running over fill'd the utmost Capacity of our Emptiness. The Riches of thy infinite Being, and the Treasures of thy no less infinite Happiness, were so diffusive, that thou wouldst not deny thy self the Satisfaction of making us, in some degree, partakers of them both. Our (r) *living Souls* which thou art pleas'd to *breath into us*, are immortal *Spirits*, capable of *knowing* thee, and *loving* thee for ever. Our *Being* proceeds entirely *from* thee, *Our Father, which art in Heaven*; and depends continually upon thee, more than it does upon the *Breath* by which we Live. Our *Knowledge* is redeem'd from the Captivity of Sin and Darknes, and improv'd by an Addition of much greater Light than ever, by thy *Son*, the *Eternal Word*,
which

which was *made Flesh, and dwelt among us.* Our Love is quickened and enflam'd *through* the assisting Presence of thy *Holy Spirit,* the eternally Subsisting Love of God. Our *Being,* our *Knowledge,* and our *Love,* thus rightly applied and perfected, are the Foundations of our present and our future Happiness: And all these Three proceeding entirely *from Thee,* by thy *Son,* and *through* thy *Holy Ghost,* oblige us to pay the utmost Homage of our *Soul,* our *Understanding,* and our *Will,* to thee, the Eternal *Three in One,* from whom, *by* whom, and *through* whom, we are what we are, and hope to be whatever we can wish.

Dear Christians, I know not what I can say more, to shew the great Importance and the Usefulness of being well instructed in the Doctrine of the Trinity. Since all we have, and all that we can wish, depend entirely

tirely upon the *Father* who makes us, the *Son* who redeems us, and the *Holy Ghost* who sanctifies us, can we imagine any thing of greater Importance to us? And since the Trinity itself is the Original Model, not only of our being Created before our Fall, but also of our being Regenerated after it, what Doctrine can there be more Useful to us, than that which lays before us what we were at first, and what we ought to be hereafter? When Man was first created by the Almighty *Three in One*, it was said, (s) *Let us make Man according to our Image, and after our Likeness*: And when we were afterwards redeem'd, it was commanded, *Let all Nations be baptized in our Name, the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. Behold what once we were, and what

(s) *Gen. i. 26.*

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what we always ought to be. We once resembled the Unity and Trinity of God, when all our *Being*, all our *Knowledge*, all our *Love*, all Three conspired to make us Happy, in serving, praising, and enjoying him; and all Three aim'd, with equal and united Strength, to attain to that great End, and glorious Felicity, for which they were bestow'd upon us. But when by Sin we fell from God to seek our Selves; when our *Being*, our *Knowledge*, and our *Love*, all Three united in a horrid Conspiracy to shake off God's Authority, and to despise his Blessings, and to seek what we can never find in our own wretched Selves; 'twas then that we defaced the Image of God in our Souls, we copied and transcribed the Devil's Image in the Place of it, we renounc'd our *Father in Heaven*, and follow'd our *Father the Devil*. To wipe away the Stain and the Reproach

proach of all this Treason against the Infinite Majesty of God, we are (t) *cleans'd and sanctified, with washing of Water by the Word of Life*, we renounce the *Devil and all his Works*, we renounce the *Pomp and Glory of the World*, we renounce the *carnal Desires of the Flesh*, these three, we renounce them all; and, upon these Terms, we are *Baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. Unless we renounce the *Devil* and his Works, our Heavenly Father will not look upon us: Unless we detest the Vanities and Follies of the *World*, the Eternal Truth and Wisdom of the *Son* of God will never enlighten our Minds: And unless we utterly abhor and constantly resist the *carnal Desires of the Flesh*, the *Holy Spirit* of Divine and Everlasting Love will

(t) *Eph. 5. 26.*

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will never take Possession of our Hearts. And who would offer to defer, one single Moment, the renouncing three such mortal Enemies, to embrace the Friendship of those Three, who, as they are one God, are one Eternal Undivided Friend? A Friend who uses all the Arts of his ingenious Love, to free us from his Enemies, and gain us to himself. A Friend who is not content to open the Mouth of Hell, and to discover to us what a dismal State of Everlasting Misery, attends the period of a Sinful Life; but, by Revealing the glorious Secrets of his own Bless'd Trinity, seems, as it were, to open all the Treasures of his Heaven to us, that our *Love* may lead us, where our *Fear* alone would never be able to drive us. His Happiness is his Heaven: And the Treasures of it, are the *Knowledge* and the *Love* which make him Happy. He knows the Truth of his All-perfect

perfect *Being*, the Truth of his Eternally Subsistent *Word*, the Truth of his no less Eternal and Subsistent *Love*, this One and Self-same Truth subsisting these three several Ways, All this, and All that it contains essentially belonging to him, he infinitely *knows* and infinitely *loves*: And being infinitely Happy in this *Knowledge* and this *Love*, he kindly reveals it to us, and invites us to be Partners of his Happiness by *Knowing* him and *Loving* him for ever. We cannot *be* what he is; but we can *know* and *love* it: And this is all that we need with, to make us Happy. The Happiness of God himself does not so much consist in *Being*, as it does in *Knowing*, and in *Loving*, what he *is*. Let us suppose that God were infinitely Perfect without *Knowing* it: What would he be the better for it? Let us again suppose he knew it, without *Loving*

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Loving it : Would he not be as little better, as if he did not know it? Tis impossible that God can be God, without being infinitely Perfect; or that he can be thus Perfect, without being infinitely Happy; or that he can be thus Happy, without *Knowing*, and *Loving*, and consequently *Enjoying* his own infinite Perfection. These are the Joys of Heaven : The Joys which God himself thinks great enough to entertain him, content him, and fully satisfy him for ever and ever : And these are the Joys to which we are invited, *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Amen.

Discourse II.

*Of the Resurrection of Christ ;
and the Influence it ought to
have upon the Life of a
Christian.*

WHen the Sabbath was past,
Mary Magdalen and Mary
the Mother of James, and Salome,
bought sweet Spices that they might
come and anoint Jesus. And very
Early in the Morning, the first Day
of the Week, they come to the Se-
pulchre, at the Rising of the Sun.
And they said among themselves:
Who shall roll us away the Stone
from the Door of the Sepulchre ?
(And looking they saw the stone roll'd
away) for it was very Great. And
entring into the Sepulchre, they saw
a young Man sitting on the right
Side, cloath'd in a White Robe,
and they were affrighted. But he
saith unto them, Be not affrighted :
Ye

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Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth who was Crucified: He is risen, he is not not here: Behold the Place where they laid him. But go your Way, tell his Disciples, and Peter, that he goes before you into Galilee: There ye shall see him as he said unto you. Mark 16. v. 1, to 8.

A lively Faith of this great Mystery, and a Christian Life conformable to it, are the best Improvements we can make of this present Gospel.

I.

They who love Darkness may easily find it, or make it, where they please; But they who love the Light, can much more easily discover it, than others can avoid it. Never was any Truth oppos'd with greater Industry on the one side, nor entertain'd with greater Reluctancy on the other: And consequently, never was any point of Faith more firmly settled and establish'd

blish'd, than this Capital Article of the Resurrection.

I. What Care was taken to hinder the Disciples from imposing this Belief upon the World, appears by the Evangelical History. (a) *The chief Priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that this Deceiver said, while he was yet Alive, after three Days I will rise again. Command therefore that the Sepulchre be made sure till the third Day, lest perhaps his Disciples come and Steal him, and say to the People, He is risen from the Dead.* These Chief Priests were the Chief Enemies of Christ: They mortally hated him: And therefore this Matter could not be in safer Hands than theirs, whose Malice would be sure to employ their utmost Art and Diligence to hinder any such Attempt against their dearly beloved

(a) *Mat. 27. 62, 63, 64, 65, 66.*

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ved Interest. Pilate said unto them, you have a Watch ; go your Way, make it sure, as you know best. They needed no more : They wanted not Will to do their worst : And, Power being granted them, away they went, and made the Sepulchre sure, sealing the Stone, and setting Watchmen. They seal'd the Stone ; and little thought that, by this very Act, they seal'd the Confirmation of our Faith. They set Watchmen to Guard it ; and little expected that these very Men would afterwards prove Witnesses against them.

When the *Third Day* came, which they so watchfully awaited, (b) *There was a great Earthquake ; an Angel descended, roll'd back the Stone, and sat upon it : His Countenance was as Lightning, and the Keepers trembled for fear of him, &c.* But when they came in-
to

(b) *Mat.* 28. 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14.

to the City, and told the Chief Priests all that had been done, they assembled with the Elders, and resolv'd to give great Sums of Money to the Soldiers, to say that the Disciples Stole away their Master, while they Slept; which if it came to the Governour's Ears, they would perswade him, and secure them from being punisht for it. Thus they omitted nothing which their Malice could invent, to hinder the Discovery of the Truth, and to disguise it with a most notorious and injurious Cheat; injurious, in accusing falsly the Disciples; and notorious, in proving it by Witnesses who said *they slept*, and therefore, by their own Confession, could not know it.

2. How little the Disciples thought of any such Design, to make the World believe the Resurrection, appears as plainly by their being so extreamly backward in believing it themselves. E-
ven

ven the Women, who are commonly more Credulous, did not believe any thing of it. They *bought sweet Spices to anoint his Sacred Body*; they did not doubt but they should find it there; their only Concern was, how to *roll away the Stone*; and were *af-frighted* at the wonderful Surprise, when they *beheld the empty Place where he was laid*, and heard the *Angel say, He is risen, he is not here.* They saw he was *not there*: The *Angel* told them, *He was risen*: And yet they could not believe it. His Death had made so deep an Impression in their Minds, that nothing could so suddenly efface it. *Mary Magdalen* runs to the Disciples *Peter* and *John*, and instead of telling them *the Lord is risen*, she complains, (c) *They have taken him out of the Sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.* She

(c) *Jo. 20. 2, 11, 14, 15, 16.*

She still believ'd he was Dead.
 And while *she stood without at the*
Sepulchre Weeping, she turn'd back,
and saw Jesus, but not knowing
him, and supposing him to be the
Gardener, says to him, If thou
hast taken him hence, tell me where
thou hast laid him: Jesus says to
 her, Mary: And by this time,
 her Eyes and Ears were open ;
 she knew his Voice, and saw
 'twas he. He likewise met the
 other Woman, (d) *And said, all*
Hail ; and they came to him, and
held him by the Feet, and worshipp'd
him. They saw, they heard,
 they felt him ; they made a shift,
 with much ado, to yield to the
 concurrent Testimonies of their
 Senses ; and at length, believ'd
 him.

The Men were yet more incre-
 dulous than the Women. Altho'
 our Saviour had forewarn'd them
 of

(d) *Mat. 28. 9.*

of his Passion, and foretold his Resurrection, their Minds and Hearts were so possess'd and troubled with his being Dead and Buried, there was no Room left for any the least Thought that ever he would Rise again. (e) *Mary Magdalene* comes, and tells the Disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that (f) *he was Alive*, but they believ'd not. The other Women (g) told the same to the Eleven, and to all the rest: But still their Words seem'd to them no better than idle Tales. 'Tis true, we read in Scripture, that, upon the Women's Message, there were two Disciples who had the Curiosity to (h) *run to the Sepulchre*: They both went in, they saw, and they believ'd, he was not there; but yet they did not believe that he was risen again from the Dead:

C

They

(e) *Jo.* 20. 18. (f) *Mar.* 16. 11.
 (g) *Luk.* 24. 9, 11. (h) *Jo.* 20. 4,
 8, 9.

They only wonder'd what was become of him: And we read particularly of Peter, that he (i) *departed wondring in himself at that which was come to pass.*

In the Way to *Emmaus* the two Disciples *saw* him, and discours'd with him; and yet (k) *they did not know him.* They were talking of him, and did not think 'twas he. We *trusted*, said they, *it had been he that should have redeem'd Israel.* They *hop'd* it once; but now they quite despair'd. He reproach'd their Folly, and their Slowness of Heart to believe. He expounded to them the Scriptures, that Christ ought to have suffer'd, and so enter into his Glory. All this did not open their Eyes. At length, when he sat at Table, took Bread, and bless'd, and broke, and gave it to them, then they knew him; they

(i) *Luk.* 24. 12. (k) *Ib.* v. 16. 21, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35.

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they return'd the same Hour to Jerusalem; they found the Disciples gather'd together; they said the Lord is risen indeed; they told them what things were done in the Way, and how they knew him in the breaking of Bread: But, as the Scripture assures us, (1) neither then did they believe them. They would not believe the Women; neither would they believe their own Brethren. So far they were from any thought of making the *Jews* believe the Resurrection, that they knew not how to go about to make themselves believe it. And thus, instead of laying their Heads together, and consulting how to Propagate this Faith among their Neighbours, we find them so divided among themselves, that altho' some of them were Witnesses of the Fact, they could not believe one another.

If we our selves had then been

C 2

living,

(1) Mark 16. 13.

living, I cannot imagine how 'tis possible for any of us to have been more Wary and more Cautious in giving Credit to it, than the Apostles were. And on the other Side, if God himself had studied, as I may say, and made it his chief Business to convince them of this Great and Fundamental Truth, I know not how to guess at any thing that could have been more powerful, and more effectual, than what he has already done. He knew their Temper: He saw how hard it was to make them thoroughly believe this Mystery; and therefore omitted nothing that could any Way dispose them, by degrees, to an entire and absolute Assurance of it.

He inspired the Women with a Pious Resolution of going to *the Sepulchre*; he let them see, the *Stone* was roll'd away, and that the Body was *not there*; he sent them to *Peter*, who came immediately

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diately with *John* to see the same; he appear'd to the *Women*, and altho' *Magdalen* was not allow'd to touch him, yet he permitted the others to hold his Feet and worship him; he appear'd to the two Disciples in the Way, who, having heard of his being seen by the Women, were less surpriz'd, when by the breaking of Bread at length they knew him. He appear'd to the other Disciples (m) as they sat at Meat; he upbraided them with their unbelief, because they believ'd not those who had seen him after he was risen; he (n) shew'd them his Hands, and Feet, and his Side, and while they were wondring for Joy, and not yet firmly believing, he call'd for something to Eat, and altho' it were otherwise needless and unfit for his Immortal State, yet nevertheless to satisfie all Doubts, he was pleas'd to Eat before them.

C 3

Thomas

(m) Mar. 16. 14. (n) Luk. 24. 40, 41, 43.

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Thomas (o) one of the Twelve, was not with them ; and, for the sake of this one, he came again, permitting him to put his Finger into the Print of the Nails, and thrust his Hand into his Side. No Condescension was too Low, if Necessary to assist their Weakness, and confirm their Faith. Besides all this, he appear'd to them (p) on the Shore, while they were labouring at Sea ; he appear'd to (q) above Five Hundred Brethren at once ; he (r) shew'd himself Alive, after his Passion, by many infallible Proofs, no less than forty Days together, appearing to them, and speaking of the Kingdom of God ; and in their full Sight, while they beheld him, he ascended into Heaven, and a Cloud receiv'd him out of their Sight.

II.

(o) Jo. 20. 24, 25, 27. (p) Jo. 21.
4. (q) 1 Cor. 15. 6. (r) Acts 1. 3, 9.

II.

No wonder therefore, if the Apostles had a lively Faith of this great Mystery. No wonder, if this lively Faith had such an Influence upon them, as to make them preach it boldly, and Die cheerfully in the Defence of it. No wonder, I say, if it made them Live like Men of another World, and *count* this Earth, with all things in it, no better than *Dung* under their Feet, when they consider'd (s) *the Power of Christ's Resurrection, the Fellowship of his Sufferings, and the great Happiness of being made conformable to his Death*, that so they might attain unto the *Resurrection of the Dead*. This was the glorious *Mark*, towards which they press'd with so much Diligence : It was to gain the *Prize*

C 4 of

(s) *Philip. 3. 10, 11, 14, 16.*

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of this High Calling in Christ Jesus. All the Primitive Christians generally *walkt by the same Rule, and minded the same Thing.* They were so much enamour'd with the other World, that they disdain'd to Quarrel about this; and therefore (t) *were of one Heart, and of one Soul.* They renounc'd the vain Enjoyments of this Life, they cut off all Occasions of Vexation and Disquiet, they left no Matter for their Passions to Work upon, but all their Thoughts were chiefly taken up with the transporting Hopes of Everlasting Happiness in Heaven.

All the Philosophy in the World could never have taught them so Divine a Lesson. The Morals of Heathen Philosophers lookt generally well enough in the Face, but never were Sound at Heart. The Folly of our Pride, and the Injustice

(t) *Acts* 4. 32.

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Injustice of Self-love, are the Original Diseases of our Nature, and the Common Roots of all our Immorality : And these they never rightly understood, nor ever knew how to cure them.

'Tis a wonderful Thing that Man, whose Reason is the best thing he can brag of, should be Born with such Unreasonable, such Unjust, and therefore Sinful, Inclinations. God, who is infinitely Good and Just, could never first make him Bad, and afterwards punish him, because himself had made him so. If Man has Sinful Inclinations predominant in him, it must be Man's own Fault : Either the Man, or his Parents, must have sinn'd ; for Sin, in God, there is none. Nothing but the Reveal'd Doctrine of Original Sin, can fairly unriddle this Mystery. I never yet met with that Philosopher whose Reason, without Revelation, could give any tolerable

ble Account of it. We cannot actually Sin, in our own Person, before we are Born: And yet when first we come into the World, we bring such Weakness and Corruption with us, that before we are well able to discern the Guilt of Sin, we are as much in Love with it, as if we had been long acquainted with it. Our own Experience is enough to teach us, that our Nature runs defiled and muddy from the very Fountain. We need no Revelation to tell us the Matter of Fact; but only to instruct us how it comes to pass. Our Nature is essentially Rational: And nevertheless we are Born with Inclinations directly opposite to the Fundamentals of all Right and Reason. There's nothing so perversely Foolish and Unjust as Man is, while he blindly follows the instinct of his own Corrupted Nature. He is naturally Sociable: But tho' he
loves

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loves Society, he hates the Laws of it: And therefore is neither easie with it, nor without it. The Protection of it is convenient: But the Restraint is troublesome to him. He likes well enough that the Government should bind his Neighbours to their good Behaviour, and hinder them from doing him any harm: But when the Restraint comes to his own Door, he cannot Brook it. If it were in his Power, he would not stick to make himself the Sole Sovereign Lord, and all the World his Slaves: And this is naturally Unjust, because no Man can claim it as his Birth-right; and most perversly Foolish, because all Men's Pretensions by Nature are the same, and 'tis notoriously impossible for every single Man to be the Sovereign Lord of all the rest. If Reason it self be thus Corrupted; if it be so naturally Foolish and Unjust; how can Man's natural

natural Reason be, of it self, sufficient to make him truly Just and Wise?

There's nothing but the *Faith* and *Grace* of *Jesus Christ* can do the Work. (u) *All who are Born of God*, who truly are his *Children*, who have receiv'd the *Faith*, the *Grace* and *Spirit of his Son*, by which they truly call him *Father*, all these *overcome the World*. They overcome the Folly of its Pride, by Christian Humility: They overcome the Injustice of its Selfish Love, by raising their Heart above it: They overcome the whole Original Corruption of it, by loving chiefly God as the Sole Author of all that's truly Good, and by loving themselves and Neighbours chiefly for this Reason, because they are made to his Image. By Loving, in the first place, him, and in the second, what resembles him, they Hate
and

Disc. II. *of the Gospel.* 51

and utterly Detest whatever hinders or defaces the Resemblance of him, they Glory in subduing, punishing and mortifying Proud Self-love, and take Delight in frequent Conquests and repeated Triumphs over it.

S. Paul says plainly, (*w*) *If Christ be not risen, (and consequently, if there be no Resurrection of the Dead) then is our Preaching vain, and our Faith is also vain.* 'Tis in vain to think of overcoming this present *World*, without believing firmly that there is a better World to come. We must love something: And, if there be no other World, why should we not love this? Or, if the other be not better, why should we abandon this, for the sake of it? But when we firmly believe, there is a longer and a better Life than this; a Life Eternally longer, and Infinitely better; *this is our Victory,*

Victory, our Faith, by which we overcome this World, and thus the Saints have always, in all Ages, made a Shift to overcome it. 'Twas thus that *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and many others, Lived and (x) Died in Faith, confessing that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth, desiring and seeking a better Country in Heaven, and chusing rather to suffer any Affliction here, than to enjoy the short Pleasures of Sin for a Time, and all this, that they might obtain a Better and an Everlasting Resurrection.* 'Twas thus that *Job* upon the Dunghil was so Patient, Humble, and Resign'd: (y) I know, says he, that my Redeemer Lives, and in my Flesh I shall see God; I myself shall see, and my Eyes shall behold him.

'Twas thus, in fine, the Christian Faith reform'd the World,
and

-(x) *Heb.* 11. 13, 16, 25, 35. (y) *Job* 19. 25, 26.

and adorn'd it with Vertues unknown to former Ages. It was their constant Practice, as Monsieur *Fleury* remarks, (2) not only "every Morning, but whenever they were threatn'd with "any danger, to repeat their Creed: The *Resurrection* and *Life Everlasting* were enough to arm them against all Temptations. They believ'd these Articles with such Assurance, that, if they had already been in Heaven and had come again to instruct us what a happy Place it is, they could not have done it more effectually than by the great Example of their Lives, by which they plainly shew'd, they were so Heavenly-minded as to scorn and hate these little Earthly things, which none but silly Sinners doat upon.

And why should we Sinners be so Silly? We have the same Truths to direct us, and with this

(2) *Hist. Account.* p. 47.

this Advantage, that now they are attested by a greater (a) *Cloud of Witnesses*, who have gone the same Way before us. We know very well the Grounds of their Belief: We know how firmly they relied upon these Grounds: We certainly know that we are Fools if we do not follow their Example: How then comes it to pass that the certain Knowledge of our Folly does not make us Wise?

'Tis Natural you'll say, to doat upon these things. But I am sure, it is not Reasonable: I am also sure the Nature of Man is Rational: And how then can it be Natural? 'Tis only the Disease of our Corrupted Nature, which inclines us to a Fondness for such things as these: And, since we know the Disease, why do we take such Pains to feed

feed it? Starving is the only Way to Cure it.

But must we Starve our Bodies, that we may Cure our Souls? I am far from saying *that*: But *this* I am assur'd the Gospel says, that we must carefully observe so strict a Rule, and so exact a Moderation in the Choice and Measure of all our Allowances, that we may Starve all those Disorderly, Irregular, and consequently Unnatural, Inclinations, which our Bodies, by ill Habits, have contracted. Not that it is unlawful for us, to love these Bodies of ours: We may love them as much as we please, provided we love them truly, and as we ought, in order to their Everlasting Happiness. Let us do what we can, to prepare them for a glorious Resurrection, and a happy Eternity: This is true Love: And as long as we chiefly aim at this, we cannot love our selves too much. The truest and
best

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best Lovers of their Bodies, are they who make it their chief Business to render them Instruments of Vertue, who labour all they can to bring them into due Subjection to the Spirit of God, and take great Care to make them Temples of the Holy Ghost. This Love of our Bodies will, one Day, make them Immortal; 'twill make them live forever, without Pain, or Sickness, or Uneasiness, or any remainder of Corruption. This Love will make them Partners of those infinite Joys which *(b)* neither the Eye has seen, nor the Ear heard, nor have enter'd into the Heart of Man, those endless Pleasures which God has prepar'd for those that love him. This Love will by degrees Refine and Spiritualize these Gross and Earthly Bodies; 'twill Work them into a more Heavenly Temper, and render them more fit to *(c)* enter
into

(b) 1 Cor. 2. 9. *(c)* Mat. 21. 23.

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into the Joys of our Lord. In a Word, this Love will overcome and mortifie that Fondness which inclines us more to please our Bodies, than to do them any real good. That Fondness which, by humouring our Bodies like young Masters, makes them afterwards become old Tyrants over us. That Folly and Madnes which is better pleas'd to humour them a little, for a Moment, than to make them Happy for ever. The Pampering our Body, the Pride of Adorning it, the Covetousness of maintaining it, the Luxury of Pleasing it, the (d) *making Provision for the Flesh*, to fulfil the Lusts thereof, all this is only fattening us like Beasts, and fitting us for an Eternal Slaughter. If our Bodies knew their own Condition, and could speak for themselves, they would beg hard to be Treated

(d) Rom. 13. 14.

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ed otherwise. And if we were truly Kind or Just, we would not do them such a Cruel, such an Everlasting Injury. Eternity is an incomprehensible Thing. We know not how to conceive the Greatness of it. That little Momentary Space of Time, which is the Measure of our longest Lives, when we compare it with Eternity, it dwindles into Nothing, and vanishes out of Sight. The Honours, Riches, and Delights, which we so greedily seek for, to Adorn, Maintain, and Please, these wretched Carcases, immediately Disappear and Vanish with it. Nothing at the Foot of the Account remains, but what will never have an end, the Guilt of Sin, and the Eternal Torments which attend it. And who would love such fatal things as these, which leave so terrible a Sting behind them? We all know very well, that when we come to
Die,

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Die, when looking back we see our past Life Dead before us, and all our past Time shrunk to Nothing, we shall then be wise enough to see the Folly and the Mischief of these things: And, since we now know it, Why should we not now be as Wise, as then we shall certainly wish to have been? Let us therefore now imitate *Christ*, who (e) *being rais'd from the Dead, dies no more; Death has no more Dominion over him.* Let us now rise from the Death of Sin; without Sinning any more; at least without permitting Sin to have any Dominion over us. Let our Minds, our Hearts, our Souls, so (f) *rise with Christ*, that we may chiefly seek *those things which are above, where Christ sits at the Right Hand of God.* Let us set our Affections on things above, not on things on the Earth; that we may

(e) *Rom. 6. 9.* (f) *Col. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.*

may be, as it were, *Dead* to all things of this *World*, and *our Life* may be *hid with Christ in God*; and that *when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear*, our *Bodies* rising from the *Dead*, *we* may also appear with him in *Glory*, and be partakers of his *Happiness* for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Discourse III.

Of Divine Love.

ONE of the Pharisees asked Jesus a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great Commandment in the Law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt Love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the first and great Commandment. And the second is like unto this; Thou shalt Love thy Neighbour as thy

Disc. III. of the Gospel. 61

thy self. On these two Commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets. And while the Pharisees were gather'd together, Jesus ask'd them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he? They say unto him, the Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in Spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit on my Right Hand, till I make thy Enemies thy Footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his Son? And no Man was able no answer him a Word, neither durst any Man, from that Day, ask him any more Questions, Mat. 22. v. 35. to the end.

I.

The Pharisees ask'd our Saviour a question, to Tempt him, and to try if they could (a) Catch him in his Discourse. He first gave them

(a) Mat. 22. 15.

them a clear and satisfactory Answer; and then ask'd another question, not to tempt, but to instruct them, and to let them see that the Root of all their Ignorance was their not (b) *searching*, and therefore not understanding, *the Scriptures*. He ask'd them, while they were all gather'd together, *what they thought of Christ?* They believ'd he was to be a *King*, a *Priest*, a *Conqueror*; and that the Hundred and Ninth *Psalms* was a Prophecy of him. They believ'd the *Messiah* was to be Born of the Race of *David*: And when they were ask'd *whose Son he was to be?* They easily answer'd the question. But because they did not conceive he was to be true God as well as Man, therefore they did not understand *how David* could call him *Lord* above a Thousand Years before he was *his Son*. They easily com-

(b) *Jo. 5. 39.*

Disc. III. *of the Gospel.* 63

comprehended how *David*, inspir'd with a Prophetick Spirit, might foresee, so long beforehand, the Birth of his Son: But the great Difficulty was, *how David* could call him *Lord*, so long before he was Born? If they had search'd and well consider'd the *Scriptures*, even this very Text here cited by our Saviour, they might have reasonably concluded that the *Messiah*, whom *David* calls his *Lord*, must of Necessity be more than his *Son*; he must be more than *Man*; in a Word, he must be true *God* as well as *Man*: And therefore they might easily have answer'd, that altho' the *Messiah* as *Man*, was not his *Son* till above a Thousand Years after; yet the same *Messiah*, as *God*, was truly his *Lord* from all Eternity before. But, because they had no such Thoughts as these about them, away they went without being able to answer a Word;

D and

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and were so strangely confounded, that *from that Day* forward, *not a Man* amongst them *durst* ever venture to *ask him any more Questions*.

Neither shall I enquire any further into this Matter. I am very well satisfied that the Personal Unity of God and Man is possible, and reconcileable with our common Systems of Philosophy. I see no Contradiction in the Case, but that the Eternally Subsistent *Word* may, if he pleases, assume to himself a Humane Body and Soul, and so appropriate them to him, that they may be as truly and as properly *his*, as my Soul and Body are *mine*: Which done, he is as much a *Man* as I am, and *God* as much as ever. I not only believe it *possible*; but, because it is revealed unto us, I firmly believe it to be *true*. And therefore, instead of admiring how it comes to pass, that *God* and
Man

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Man are both united in one and the self-same Person ; I shall apply my thoughts to things more useful , by considering how it comes about, that the Love of God and Love of Man are both inseparably united in one and the same Self-love ; so strictly united, that we cannot truly love our selves, without loving God above all things, and our Neighbour as our selves.

As *Christ* was *God* and *Man*, so *Christian Self-love* is both *Divine* and *Humane*. 'Tis *Divine*, in loving *God* above all things : 'Tis *Humane*, in Loving our *Neighbour* as our selves. And, which is yet more wonderful, the Love of our Neighbour is *Divine* ; and the Love of God is *Humane*.

II.

As *Christ* could not have redeem'd us, if he had not been true God as well as Man ; so the

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Love of our Neighbour cannot save us, unless it be Divine as well as Humane. The true Love of our Self and our Neighbour, is as Divine as the Love of God is. Though *the Commandments are two* (c) yet *the Love is One and the Same*, which first begins from God, and then descends to us, and so extends it self to our Neighbours. We love God above all things, because he is infinitely Good, and therefore infinitely deserves it. The more we love him, the more we love our selves, and chiefly our dear Souls, because by them we are made like him, capable of Knowing, Loving, and Enjoying him. And Lastly, Because our Neighbours Souls are all of the same Make as ours, endowed with the same lovely Faculties, and equally capable of the same Divine Happiness, therefore we love them
for

(c) S. Greg. Hom. 26. in E. ang.

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for the sake of the same God, and for the self-same Motives, as we love our selves.

Alas ! The Love of our Bodies only, without any Prospect further than this present World, is far from being true Self-love. Our Body is not our Self ; nor the better Part of our self : And we are guilty of a gross Mistake, whenever we treat it as kindly as if it were so. There's no Self-love is true, but that which aims at our true Good, and leads us to our true Happiness; of which our Body, in this Mortal State, is utterly incapable. The greatest Felicity that ever any Worldly Body enjoy'd on Earth, was never better than a soft Bed to a Sickly Person, who being restless, and still uneasie in himself, is always turning and tossing, to and fro, from one Side to the other, never quiet, never pleas'd, but always seeking rest, and never finding it. He is therefore a very

lilly Self-lover, who is so Fond of a Sick Bed, with all his Julips, Cordials, and Restoratives about him, that he had rather still lye waking there, than Sleep, Rise up, and be Well. Death is the only Way, which from a vertuous Life begins to lead us, by a happy Resurrection, to a perfect Cure of all Distempers of our Minds and Bodies, in a Blessed State of Immortality and Glory. And this is the Generous Aim, and Glorious Design, of true Self-love.

When we love our Bodies better than our Souls, we love our selves like Brutes: And as Beasts of Prey are always Quarrelling and Fighting who shall fare the best, even so this brutish Love of ours creates a Thousand Quarrels with our Neighbours. We cannot truly love them, whilst we do not truly love our selves. Our Love is False at Home; and how can it be True Abroad? But when

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when we love our Souls, as they deserve, incomparably better than our Bodies; then it is we love our selves like Men, and Christians. Our Love is then not only Humane but Divine. The Subject, and the Object, of our Love, is Humane: But the Law which obliges us, the Grace which enables us, and the Motives which invite us to it, all these are Divine. We love our selves, as lively Copies of the Divine Original: We look beyond the Mean Capacities and Powers of these frail and mortal Bodies: We value infinitely more, what's infinitely better, our Spiritual and Immortal Souls, the Images of the Eternal God, endow'd with a Capacity of Knowing and Loving, Possessing and Enjoying him for ever, even as he Knows and Loves, Possesses and Enjoys himself.

These are the Excellencies which we are in love with,

D 4 where-

wherefoe'er we meet them ; and, because we never fail to find them, not only in our Selves but in our Neighbours, in Bad as well as Good, in Enemies as well as Friends, therefore we always love them every one, and love them as our selves. We (d) *Pray for those that persecute us, we do Good to those that hate us*, and endeavour to be perfect, even as our Father in Heaven is perfect. He loves himself ; and, because he does so, he therefore loves to Communicate his overflowing Fulness to his Creatures. We love him also ; we should be ungrateful if we did not ; and because we love him, we therefore love in our selves, the true Resemblance of him. And the more we truly love our selves, in him, and for him, the more we are inclin'd, upon the very same Account, to love our Neighbour as we love our selves. The

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The Consequence of this is very Comfortable. There can be no Excess in true Self-love. Let us only love our selves aright, we cannot love our selves too much. We are only commanded to prefer our Souls before our Bodies : And, if of these two Parts we love the Better best, the more we love it, the more we are to be commended for it ; because the fuller we are of such Self-love as this, the more our Love o'erflows upon our Neighbour, and the more abundantly we satisfy our Obligation of loving him as our self. Nay, which is yet more Strange, and not less True, the fuller we are of this *Self-love*, the more abundantly and perfectly we fulfil *the first and great Commandment* of loving God above all things.

III.

As Christ could never have
D 5 saved

saved us, if he had not been true Man as well as God, so neither can the Love of God avail us to Salvation, if it be not truly Humane as well as Divine. There are two Ways of loving God; 1. as he is Good in himself; 2. as he is Good to us. The Second Notion is inseparable from the first: And, if we could contrive to separate them in Conceit, and represent to our Mind his Infinite Goodness in himself, without any the least Hope or Possibility of his being Good to us, we might admire, but we could never love him. Whatsoever is Good in it self, and is not so *to us*, is the same *to us* as if it were good for nothing. No Good is *ours*, but what is good *to us*: And if it be not apprehended and supposed to be *our* Good, it cannot be the Object of *our* Love. If God himself were not our Lord and Master, if he had no Power over us, we should have
have

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have no Reason to *fear* him: And again, if we imagine, that he neither is our Friend nor Benefactor, that he has no Kindness for us, and that he never did us any good, nor ever intends to do it, we should not have, in view, any Reason at all to *love* him.

God who has made us reasonable Creatures, does not oblige us to love him without Reason. He is in himself the Supreme Rule of all Reason, and therefore cannot possibly command a thing that is unreasonable. The two great Reasons, why we are oblig'd to love him, are, because he is our Greatest Benefactor, and our Greatest Friend: And these two Reasons lay fast hold of us, and deeply engage our Hearts, because they are profoundly rooted in Self-love, by which we cannot truly love our selves unless we love so great a Benefactor, and so great a Friend.

I. We

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1. We love him as our Greatest Benefactor. All our Happiness is his free Gift : We never can be truly Happy, unless he pleases to make us so. This Reason is the first that moves us, and engages us, to love him : And thus it is, that true Self-love begins to fulfil *the First and Great Commandment*, by weaning us from the Deceits of this World, and making us love the Maker of it above all things in it.

2. We love him also as our Greatest Friend. And this is not only the more perfect, but the more endearing Motive of the two. 'Tis the more perfect ; because it regards the Giver more than the Gift, and the Person of the Benefactor, more than any other thing which he is able to bestow upon us. 'Tis also the more endearing Motive ; because a Benefit conferr'd at Random, and scatter'd, as it were, by Chance, Necessity, or Humour, loses the
best

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best Part of its Value ; and is not half so obliging as when it is bestow'd on purpose, with a kind design, and out of a true Love towards us. A Benefit, under these Circumstances, obliges us to be doubly Grateful ; not only for the Gift it self, but much more for the Love that gives it.

These are the two sorts of Divine Love ; the First is call'd *Desire* or *Hope* ; the Second is *Charity* or *Friendship* : And my present Business is, to prove that neither of them can subsist without a Mixture of Self-love, by which they are truly Humane as well as Divine.

There are two Sorts of Self-love ; the one, of the Soul ; the other, of the Body. That of our Souls, is always good. They are immortal Spirits : And if we love them, as such, in order to their Everlasting Happiness, we cannot love them too much. But the Love of our Body, tho'
it

it may sometimes be very good, is often very much otherwise.

For Example : When we love our Body better than our Soul, our Love is manifestly Vicious. It is not Rational, to love the worst Part best : Nor is it a well ordered Love, to prefer the Temporal Satisfaction of our Bodily Senses before the Eternal Joys of Heaven. A Man, who loves himself at this rate, if he believes *Hell-fire*, he needs no other Grace to make him *fear* it : Corrupted Nature, of it self, is abundantly enough to make him Tremble and Grieve to think he is in Danger of it. But yet the very Source of his excessive *Fear* and *Grief* is a grievous Mortal Sin against *the First and Great Commandment*: And all his *Grief* and *Fear*, how great soever, are not able to Exclude this grievous Crime ; no more than a Stream, because 'tis great, is able to Exclude its Fountain, and Subsist without it.

Such

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Such *Fear* and *Sorrow*, which have no other Root, than such a wicked *Love*, can never make him a true Penitent; because, the greater they are, the more they hinder him from being so. They cannot possibly be greater, than the wicked *Love*, which breeds them; nor can they well be less: And therefore, the greater they are, the more Wicked Sinner he is. In a Word, they may possibly make him Fancy, that if he were dying he would by all Means avoid Hell: But alas! The Principal and the most Necessary Means of his avoiding it, are *the Love of God, with all his Heart, with all his Soul, with all his Mind, and the Love of his Neighbour as himself*; and these are utterly excluded by his Vicious and Inordinate Self-love.

Such a false Self-lover as this, can never be a true Servant of God. If ever he pretends to serve him, 'tis only as the *Indians*
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serve the Devil for fear he should do them any harm. He desires no other Good from God, than that he will please not to Torment him. He neither loves God for his own Sake, nor his Soul for God's Sake, nor his Body for his Soul's Sake. If he has any Kindness for his Soul, whilst here, 'tis chiefly because his Body cannot live without it : And as for any Soul hereafter, he had rather have none at all ; because he knows that, without a Soul, his Body cannot suffer, and only is in danger of Suffering Everlasting Torments with it. A Slave is a wretched Creature. He has no Concern for his Master, but all for himself. He neither serves for Love, nor Hire. He hates his Work ; Loves nothing but Idleness ; and Fears nothing but being Beaten for't. This Character agrees exactly with our False Self-lover. His Fear of Hell is Slavish, and Worse than Servile.
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He values not the Loss of Heaven: That's a thing that never troubles him. If God will only allow him all his Pleasures here, and free him from Hell-fire hereafter; he hopes for no other Reward; he desires no other Mercy at his Hands.

Such false Self-love as this, is utterly Irreconcilable and Inconsistent with the Love of God. 'Tis only then that our Self-love is True and Rational, when we love our Body for our Soul's Sake, and our Soul for God's Sake: And this Self-love is always presupposed and really included in the Love of God for his own Sake. 'Tis he alone who truly deserves to be lov'd upon his own account: And when we are truly sensible of it, then it is we truly love our Soul, not for its own Sake, but for his. The chief Perfection of our Soul consists in being capable of Seeing, Loving, and Enjoying God,
and

and of being his Intimate Friend and Domestick Servant for ever. These are the Excellencies of our Soul, for which we love it, *in* God, and *for* him. We love it, *for* him ; that is, we love it, because 'tis fitted for the Enjoyment of him : And we love it, *in* him ; because 'tis only there that we can ever find its True and Everlasting Happiness. Moreover, as we chiefly love our Soul in reference to God, *for* whom alone it was Made, and *in* whom alone it is Happy ; so we chiefly love our Body in reference to our Soul, as being fitted for the Use and Service of it, the Instrument of its Vertue on Earth, and Partner of its Eternal Reward in Heaven.

Such a true Self-lover is a true Servant of God. He is not like a Slave, who serves by Force, and not by Inclination. He has more than one Motive to serve his Master. He does not serve him

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him only for *Fear of Stripes* ; but chiefly, in *Hope* of the *Eternal Happiness* which he has promis'd him. When he thinks of his Master's Justice (e) *who is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell*, the very Thought affrights him ; because, as long as he Lives, he is never quite out of danger. Nor is he to be blamed for being a little afraid. His Fear is answerable to the kind Design of those great Threats we read in Scripture ; it lessens the Force of his Temptations ; and awakens him into a wise, and steady, and lasting Resolution of endeavouring all he can to avoid so sad a Consequence. But still his Fear is greater for his Soul, than for his Body ; 1. Because he loves his Soul a great deal better ; 2. Because the Spiritual Pains which are Peculiar to the Soul, are far more piercing than any Sensible Torment

(e) *Mat.* 10. 28.

Torment which is common to it with the Body. As much as Heavenly Joys exceed all Worldly Pleasures, so much the Loss of Heaven exceeds all Pain of Sense. And therefore the Thought of Losing God, who is (f) *the exceeding Great Reward* of all his Labours, and the Crown of all his Hopes, is much more Terrible to any true Self-lover, than all the Fire of Hell.

This is the first Degree of true Self-love. I grant, 'tis Servile; but 'tis far from being Slavish. The *Fear* of Punishment, without *Hope* of Reward, is the true Character of a Slave, who feels no other *Love* than that of himself above all things. But the Character of such a Servant, as now we speak of, is far more Noble and Generous. He serves indeed; but 'tis an Honour to him, that he serves so Great and Good

(f) *Gen. 15. 1.*

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Good a Master, for so Great and Glorious a Reward. The present Earnest of his Wages, and the first Reception into his Master's Family, are greater Favours than 'twas in his Power to deserve. And what then shall we say, of being afterwards adopted Son and Heir, of being rather a Companion than a Servant, and of being admitted into the admirable Counsels of his Infinite Wisdom, the prodigious Wonders of his Boundless Power, and the unconceivable Treasures of his Incomprehensible Goodness ! My God ! What a surprising and astonishing Reward is this ! how can we chuse but *Love* it, and *Desire* it above all things else, except thy infinitely better Self, who art so Good and Kind as to reveal it, promise it, and give us all Encouragement to *Hope* for it ! When the *Fear* of Justice thus drives us into the Arms of Mercy, with a *Loving* Confidence and *Hope* in him
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who is our Greatest *Benefactor*, and the Only Author of so Glorious a *Reward*; I own that the *Desire* and *Hope* are *Servile* as well as the *Fear*, and as much grounded in *Self-love*; but yet since God himself is the best and greatest Part of all our Happiness, and since the whole is owing to his Mercy, they are also grounded in the *Love of God*, which, by the strongest Ties of Interest and Gratitude, is join'd in a strict Alliance with this true *Self-love*, and is inseparable from it.

I have read a longer Lecture of Anatomy upon this Subject, than I first design'd. But however I have not lost my Time; because I have already prov'd the first thing I propos'd; which is, that our First *Love of God*, which is call'd *Desire* or *Hope*, is so essentially *Interested* that it cannot possibly Subsist without a Mixture of *Self-love*.

The second Part of my present Business

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Business is, to prove that even our most Perfect *Love of God*, which we call *Charity*, or *Divine Friendship*, cannot be without a Mixture of a more improv'd and more refin'd *Self-love*. It would have been an unpardonable *Presumption* in us, to have guess'd that such wretched Creatures, as we, are capable of any Friendship betwixt God and Us; unless himself had taught us the Secret of it. He tells his Apostles (g) that they *are not only his Servants, but his Friends*; and by the Word of God himself we are assured, that (b) *he loves those that love him*: And what is this but Mutual Love, which we call Friendship? Since therefore we are capable of a Divine Amity with God himself; let us see if it be not Humane as well as Divine. Let us consider well on what
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(g) *Jo.* 13. 14, 15. (b) *Prov.* 8.
17.

Foundation it stands, and by what Steps we tend to the Perfection of it ; and we shall find that all its Purity does not exclude Self-love, but only exalt it, and improve it.

And that we may not Ramble after our own arbitrary Notions, let us follow the direction of the Scriptures. *S. Paul* assures us, that whosoever (i) comes to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of those that seek him. We must believe that our Lord and Master is God, and therefore infinitely Perfect in himself: But, because this is not enough to engage our Love, he adds, that *he is a Rewarder* of all whom he admits into his Family, his Children and his Servants, in a Word, of all *that seek him*. The same Apostle, in the same Chapter, extols the *Faith* and *Hope* of *Moses*, for (k) *chusing*

(i) *Heb.* 11. 6. (k) *v.* 25, 26.

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sing rather to suffer Affliction, than enjoy the Pleasures of Sin; because he had Respect unto the Recompence of the Reward. And that we may not despise this Mercenary Motive of (l) repenting, doing Works of Penance, and turning from our evil Ways, our Saviour himself, in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, is pleas'd to tell us, that (m) when he came to himself, he said, how many hired Servants of my Father have Bread, and to Spare, and here I Perish with Hunger. He envies the Happiness of his Father's hired Servants; he heartily wishes to be one of them; and why? Because they have Bread enough, and to Spare, and are Rewarded, as much and more than they deserve. If the Love, Desire, and Hope, of being so plentifully Rewarded, and of Faring so much better with his Father than without him; if (I say) this In-

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(l) John 3. 9, 10. (m) Luk. 15, 17.

interested Motive had been really unworthy of a *Perfect* Humble Penitent, our Saviour would not have so solemnly and amply recommended it unto us: He would not have told us, how welcome he was to his Father; how joyfully he *ran* to meet him; how readily he call'd for the *best Robe*; and how kindly he entertain'd him as his dearly beloved Son; because he humbly desir'd only to be *one of his hired Servants*. And here we may plainly see, that when a Man repents, and mends, for the *Hope* of *Gaining* Heaven, and the *Fear* of *Losing* it, these Motives are like Wings of *Love*, by which it flies from Sin to God, and reconciles us to him.

I could cite a great deal more, to this Effect: But this is enough concerning *Faith* and *Hope*. S. Paul concludes, that (n) *the greater of these is Charity*: But must we

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(n) 1 Cor. 13. 13.

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we lay aside our *Faith* and *Hope* because our *Charity* is greater? In Heaven indeed we shall not *believe*, because we shall *see*; nor shall we *hope*, because we shall *enjoy*: But alas! We are not yet in Heaven; nor shall we ever get thither, unless we Live by *Faith* and *Hope* as well as *Charity*. They are the only Three Steps from hence to Heaven. The first belongs to the Mind; the other two to the Heart. We first *believe* in God, and then we *love* him, partly as our greatest *Benefactor*, and chiefly as our greatest *Friend*. The first Love is our *Hope*; the second, *Charity*: And the first prepares us naturally for the second, because 'tis always natural for Gratitude to end in Friendship, when the *Benefactor* is our *Friend*; and he, who loves us *gratis*, is every way deserving, and lovely beyond Exception. But must we forget our Benefactor, that we may the better remember our Friend? Does the Perfection of

Friendship oblige us to slight the Favours and Assistances of a Friend, and to entertain them with a cold Indifference, purely because we love him? Must we not value Heaven more than Hell, nor Vertue more than Vice, for fear of valuing God too little, and our Selves too much? I do not understand the Mystery of this Romantick Love. A Man of Wit may easily advance a Paradox, and plausibly maintain it; till he falls into the Hands of another Person who has as much Wit as himself: But then 'tis no Dishonour to him, if Truth, upon equal Terms, prevail against him. And this has lately been the Case of a great Prelate. He was forc'd at length to explain and soften a great many bold Expressions which justly gave Offence: And now he seems to own, that the Purest Love of God is Interwoven with an Interested Love of our selves. His Words are these;

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these; (o) *We love him, says he, as our Personal Good, as our Reward, and as our All that we can wish for: And in another place he confesses, that (p) This, in some Sense, is our Greatest Interest.*

You'll say perhaps, we do not love a Friend for any Good that he does us, or we do him. I am sure *Seneca* is of another Mind. He says, that (q) *of all Felicities the most charming is that of Friendship; it sweetens our Cares, dispells our Sorrows, is an Antidote against all Calamities. True Friends*

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(o) *On l'aime comme notre bien personnel, comme notre recompense, comme notre tout. Les principales propositions du livre des Max. des Saints, justifiez par des expressions plus fortes des SS. Auteurs. pag. 9.*

(p) *Je veux meme qu'on desire la Bonté de Dieu entant que bonne pour nous, et Dieu entant qu'il est notre bien, notre bonheur, et notre recompense. Ce qui en un sens est le plus grand de tous nos interests. ibid. pag. 52. (q) Sen. de Vit. Beat.*

are the whole World to one another. From whence I infer, that either the *whole World* is good for Nothing, or else, that Friends are a mutual Good to one another. They are each of them Happy in the other: At least each Party thinks so: And, if they do not think it, their Friendship is at an End. And this is always true in Humane Friendship. In Divine, 'tis otherwise: Because the Good, the Advantage, the Happiness, is all on the Creature's side: God is not Happy in us; nor any way the Better for us. He loves us, because he likes us. He likes us, because he made us like himself. In this Sense, he loves us for his own Sake; and, in the same Sense, We love our Selves for his Sake. But alas! God does not love us for any Good we do him; he loves us meerly for the Good which he himself has done us. We are the Work of his own Hands; he fitted us for Himself, his
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Company, his Friendship ; therefore he loves us. And here it is, we cannot imitate his Love. We cannot love him, for any Good we do him : And yet, love him we must, for some Good or other ; or else, we cannot love him at all. If we cannot love him for any Good of ours, by which we are Good to him ; we must love him for that infinite Good of his and ours, by which he is Good to us. And what is this, but Interest ? Such Friendship as this, I can make a shift to understand. But when People begin to talk of loving God so well, that, though they were sure to be damn'd for't, they would still love him as much as ever ; it sounds in my Ears as extravagantly, as if they should tell me, they love him so much, because he is God, that, if he were not God, they would not love him less. I cannot think the Flame is Pure, when 'tis all Heat, and no Light.

I own, with *Seneca*, that (r) where there is any other Invitation to Friendship, than the Friendship it self, that Friendship will be Bought and Sold; and that a Friendship of Interest can never last longer than the Interest it self. All this is very true. But there's a double Mistake in the Application of it. For, 1. the Friendship of God is our Eternal Interest; and Eternity will be sure to last long enough: 2. God's Friendship is undoubtedly our greatest Interest; and therefore there is no danger of any other greater Invitation to it.

What can be more inviting than that Infinite Goodness of God, who is so much our Friend as to give us all he *has*, and all he *is*; his *Heaven*, and *Himself*! 'Tis all that makes him infinitely Happy; and can we wish for more? If this be our true Interest, as certainly it is, is it so Mean a thing,

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thing, that we can be asham'd to *seek* it, and think our selves accountable for the pretended Imperfection of *Loving* and *Desiring* it? Does not *Christ* our Saviour instruct us in the Gospel, and tell us, that (s) *the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a Merchant-man that seeks good Pearls: Who when he had found one Pearl of great Price, he went and Sold all he had, and bought it.* Every body understands well enough the Notion of a *Merchant-man*. He is one who makes his Trade his chief Business. He *hopes* for Nothing more than *Gain*; *fears* Nothing more than *Loss*. He seeks *good Pearls*; because he consults his Interest, and finds he gains most by them. And when he finds a *good one* indeed, a *Pearl of so great Price* that 'tis enough to make his Fortune for ever; he does not demurr the least, but presently *sells all he has*

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(s) *Mat. 13. 45, 46.*

to purchase it ; because he is too Wise, to Neglect his Greatest Interest.

The Lesson is plain: And the Case is plainly ours. There is only *One Good Pearl*, which is *the Kingdom of Heaven*. A *Pearl* of so *Great Price*, that, for the *Hope* of *Gaining* it, and *Fear* of *Losing* it, we ought to part with All we have, as being Nothing in Comparison to it. The Voice of Nature and Right Reason tells us, that we ought to do it, even without Bidding, and that we are arrant Fools if we do not. And therefore, O Merciful God of Heaven and Earth, who art thy Self the Heaven of Heavens, whose *Favour* is our Greatest *Gain*, and whose *Displeasure* is our Greatest *Loss*, Grant, we beseech thee, that we may so *truly Love* our selves in Thee, and *for* Thee, that we never may misplace our *Hopes* and *Fears*, but always above all things value our
Eternal

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Eternal Interest, and cheerfully abandon all our Temporal Concerns, to purchase and possess that Pearl of infinite Price, the Kingdom of Heaven, which thou hast prepar'd for us from the Foundation of the World. Amen.

Discourse IV.

Of Worldly Sorrow, and Spiritual Comfort.

Jesus said to his Disciples, I now go my Way to him that sent me, and none of you ask me, whither I go. But because I have said these things, Sorrow has fill'd your Heart. Nevertheless I tell you the Truth: It is Expedient for you that I go away: For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you: But if I depart, I will send him to you. And when
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he is come, he will convince the World of Sin, and of Righteousness, and of Judgment. Of Sin, because they have not believ'd in me: Of Righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you shall see me no more: And of Judgment, because the Prince of this World is already judg'd. I have yet many things to say to you; but you cannot bear them now. However, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth. For he will not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall have heard, that he will speak; and he will tell you things to come. 'Tis he that will glorifie me: Because he will take of mine, and will tell it to you. All things that my Father has, are mine. Therefore I said, that he will take of mine, and will tell it to you. John 16. v. 5, to 16.

The Sorrow which fill'd the Hearts of the Disciples, and the Comfort which our Saviour promis'd them, are the two Principal Things

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Things which here occur to our Consideration ; by which we may clearly see, that all the Bitterness of our Sorrow proceeds from our Love of this World, and all the Sweetness of our Comfort is owing to our Love of God.

I.

We read in the Prophet *Jeremy* (a) *Cursed is the Man that trusts in Man, and Blessed is the Man that trusts in God.* He who hopes in God, who firmly relies upon the Blessings which he promises, who (b) *knows in whom he has believ'd, and is perswaded he is able to keep his Word ;* such a Man as this, who looks beyond this World, and places all his Comfort in a hopeful Prospect of the other, who chiefly regards the great End of his Journey, and little values what befalls him by the Way,

(a) 17. 5, 7. (b) 2 Tim. 1. 12.

Way, such a Man, I say, is (as the Prophet describes him) like (c) *a Tree planted by the Waters, which will not fear when the Heat comes, nor be solicitous in time of Drought; but its Leaf shall be always Green, nor shall it ever cease from yielding Fruit.* All is fruitful, (d) *All things readily conspire and Work together for the Good, the Welfare, and the Happiness, of those who love God above all things.* No *Fears* nor *Cares* can much molest those Souls, who are not much *afraid* of losing any thing but God, nor much *concern'd* for any other Success but that of Serving, Pleasing, and Enjoying him. All this they can do in spite of all the World; and the more spiteful it is against them, the more it helps them to do it: For which Reason they justly set it at defiance, and bid it do its worst.

But

(c) *Jer. 17. 8.* (d) *Rom. 8. 28.*



But it is not so with those imperfect Souls, who commonly love God too little, and the World too much. They are seldom free from *Fears* and *Cares* which are uneasie and troublesome to them. In the most prosperous Times, and in the fairest Sun-shine of their Fortune, they are ever Busie, Careful, and Solicitous, to make Provisions for their Plenty, Ease, and Pleasure: And at the least Appearance of a Cloud which seems to frown upon them, they are presently allarm'd, discourag'd, and dejected, with a melancholy Fear of Losing all the Harvest of their Labours. The more they set their Hearts upon these Temporal Advantages, the greater are their *Cares* to ensure them, and their *Fears* to lose them, and the greater is their *Grief* whenever they despair of the Enjoyment of them. The Apostles *hoped that*
Christ

Christ (e) *would have redeem'd Israel* in another manner than he did: They expected temporal Blessings from him, and great Places under him, when once he pleas'd to redeem them: But as for their Eternal Concerns, they were not so Inquisitive about them. And this is what our Saviour complains of.

I now go my Way, says he, *to him that sent me, and none of you ask me, whither I go.* He was the best Friend they ever had upon Earth: They knew it, and own'd it, and lov'd him dearly for it: And yet, when they heard him talk of going away and leaving them, they did not so much as ask him, whither he went. If they had had their Thoughts about them, without Doubt their Friendship, or their Interest, or both together, would have prompted them to ask the Question. But

(e) *Luk.* 24. 21.

But alas ! their Thoughts were otherwise employ'd : Their Hearts were full of Sorrow, which allow'd no Room for any Thoughts relating to their principal and most important Business. Their Lord and Master had immediately before inform'd them, that the *Jews* would (f) *put them out of the Synagogues* ; and that *the Time was coming* when *who-soever kill'd them* would think that he did *God Service* : And because he said these things, therefore they were too full of Sorrow to think of any thing else.

I go to him that sent me. He speaks of his Death and Passion, as of a Journey to the other World ; a *Going to him that sent him* ; a Passage from Earth to Heaven. This is the true Christian Idea which we ought to have of Death ; we ought to look upon it as the Gate of Everlasting Life,
and

and not only be Willing, but Glad, to Die, because there is no other Way to Live for ever. If we love Life, surely the longest and the best Life is the most deserving of our Love; and we have then most Reason to Rejoice when we approach the nearest to the happy Enjoyment of it. If we act according to that Reason which we so much brag of, we shall be resign'd, at least; and tho' the thoughts of Persecution and Death may trouble us, yet they will never overwhelm our Hearts with Grief, nor hinder us from being mindful of those Duties which prepare us for it, and the great Advantages which never fail to attend it.

This was the great Fault of the Apostles, for which our Saviour Reprehended them. It would have been a pardonable Weakness in them, to have been a little troubled and afflicted at the News of losing all the little Happiness.

pineness they hoped for here ; provided their *Sorrow* had not *fil'd* their *Heart*, and hinder'd them from being Attentive to their Duty, and from being comforted with thinking of the infinitely greater Happiness which they expected hereafter. Our Saviour himself, for our Instruction, permitted the Weakness of Humane Nature to prevail so far upon him, as to throw him into a Bloody Sweat ; yet at the same time, not unmindful of his Heavenly Comforts, he was perfectly resign'd, he generously (*g*) *despised the Shame and Pain of Earthly Sufferings*, and *for the Joy set before him*, willingly *endured the Cross*.

This is the great Disease of our Corrupted Nature: We eagerly pursue the Enjoyments of this present Life ; the Gratification of our Senses is a Mighty Matter
with

(*g*) Heb. 12. 2.

with us; we look upon it as a real and substantial Good; and, tho' we are always cheated in our Hopes, and disappointed in our Expectations, yet still we are as fond of our Folly, and as obstinate in it, as if we did not see it. The Pure and Intellectual Joys which we expect hereafter, are out of the Road of our Acquaintance, we are not used to consider them, and, when we do, 'tis very superficially; our Thoughts never lay fast hold of them: But, when we offer at it, they vanish away like Ghosts and Spirits, and leave us to our selves to make the best we can of such poor Entertainments as we meet with here. We believe indeed, that in a Future State we shall be fitted for Immortal Joys, and relish them as Angels do in Heaven, with a Satisfaction which surpasses infinitely all that we are able to imagine: But what signifies our be-

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believing All this Future Happiness, unless we love it, and desire it, as much as we believe it.

II.

Our *Mind* is well enough instructed, when we *know* the Truth; but our *Hearts* have never learnt their Lesson till we *love* it. When once we are in Love with Heaven, we need no other Comfort upon Earth. Let the World go which way it will, 'tis no great matter to a Man whose Heart and Treasure are in Heaven. The worse he fares in a Bad World, the less he cares for it, the easier he leaves it, and the more he pleases himself with thinking that he is upon his Journey to a better Place. He finds by Experience, that a Sickly Mind, incumbred with a Mortal Body, and confin'd to a Giddy World, where Fortune reels at random, can never be
secure

secure of any long Enjoyment of its Ease. He sees the Vanity of seeking Comfort here; and experiences the Deceitfulness of relying upon it, even when he finds it. He wisely considers, that all Humane Comfort only serves to raise him above Dangers, by flattering him with Hopes to avoid them; and that these Hopes being always very uncertain, his Consolation arising from them must of necessity be very imperfect: Whereas the Heavenly Comfort, which the Love of God inspires, quite changes the Nature of these Dangers; gives them a lovely Aspect, takes away the Fear of them, and makes them welcome to him; with a firm Assurance of Gaining infinitely more by Suffering, than by Avoiding them.

The Apostles were not yet arrived to this Perfection. Their Love of Heaven was not yet so strong and powerful, as to withdraw

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draw and wean them from the Earth. They lov'd these Earthly things too much, and Heavenly things too little; and the Visible Presence of our Saviour was, in some degree, the Occasion of it. They saw what Miracles he did: They saw how kind he was to them: And the more they relied upon his Power to secure them, and his Kindness to assist them, the sonder they were of making Tabernacles here, and less concern'd for their Eternal Happiness hereafter.

To disengage their Inclinations from the World, he told them how unkindly it was like to use them; how vain and foolish a thing it was to expect true Comfort in it: And therefore how reasonable it was, that since they expected nothing but Afflictions from below, they ought to seek for all their Comfort from above.

This

This was a very disagreeable Lesson to them ; and no wonder if it seem'd a little hard at first. But *nevertheless* our Saviour told them the Truth : *It is,* says he, *expedient for you that I go away ;* because, as long as I stay here, your Hearts will still be hankering after Earthly Comforts ; and therefore, *if I go not away, the Heavenly Comforter will not come to you.* His Comforts are all Spiritual and Divine ; they are inconsistent with those which now you are so loth to part with ; you cannot enjoy them both together ; you must of necessity chuse ; and I have chosen for you , what is best : I have resolv'd to depart , and send him to you.

The Love of God above all things, and the Blessed Hope of Seeing and Enjoying him for ever, is as much above all Worldly Comfort, as Heaven above Earth. 'Tis the greatest Happiness
that

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that we can ask, or God can grant, on this side Heaven. Fruition is Heaven it self; and nothing can come nearer to it, than a lively Faith and lovely Hope of it. Our Faith and Hope are the Support and Ground-work, but our Love of God is the Life and Soul of all our Heavenly Comfort; which is always greater or lesser, in proportion to this Love. There's nothing but the Eternal Love, by which God infinitely loves the full Perfection of his Being, and the perfect Knowledge of it: Nothing else can justly be esteem'd the true Comforter of our Souls.

When once this *Comforter* is come, he soon convinces us what wilful Fools we were, to run so blindly on, in a mistaken Love of our selves. He convinces us, that what we call Self-Love, that silly Vice, which makes us so strangely fond of Earthly Comforts, is the very Thing
F which

which does us the greatest Mischief in the World : Because,
 1. It makes our Incredulity a *Sin* without Excuse. 2. It obstructs our Way to Heaven, the *Righteousness* and *Justice* of a Christian Life. 3. It betrays us to the Power, the Tyranny, and Slavery of *the Prince of this World*, and ranges us among the Number of those whom (*h*) *the God of this World has blinded.*

1. It makes our Incredulity a *Sin* without Excuse. *When the Comforter is come*, says our Saviour) *he shall convince the World of Sin, because they have not believed in me.* And why did they not Believe in him ? It was because he came to Teach them Truths belonging to another World, and they were so in Love with this, they could not abide to Believe him. This was their shameful *Sin*:
 They

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They hated the Light, he brought from Heaven with him ; they could not endure to entertain it ; they wilfully shut their Eyes against it.

2. It obstructs the *Righteousness* or *Justice* of a Christian Life. *When the Comforter comes, he shall convince the World of Righteousness, because, says he, I go to my Father, and you shall see me no more :* He shall convince us, that since our Saviour *came* to shew us the *Way*, and went to *prepare* us a *Place* ; 'tis therefore *right* and *just* that we should follow him in the *Way* which he has shew'd us ; and that our *Treasure* and our Heart should always be in that desirable *Place*, which he is gone to *prepare* for us. We shall *see Him* here *no more* : Our chief and most important Business is, to *see him* there : And therefore, whatsoever we *see* here, must never dare to usurp the chief place in our Heart.

F 2

3. It

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3. It betrays us to the Power and Slavery of the Devil, who blinds our Mind and Heart with foolish Expectations and Desires of an Imaginary Happiness on Earth. As long as we are fonder of this, than of the Joys of Heaven, so long we are govern'd by (i) *the Ruler of the Darkneſs of this World*, who domineers and tyrannizes over us, and (k) *leads us Captives at his pleasure*. But *when the Comforter is come*, he convinces us of God's Judgment, not only being pronounc'd, but executed, against *the Prince of this World*; because he is then already judg'd, (l) *a stronger than he is come upon him*, he is conquer'd, he is cast out of Doors, his Armour is all taken from him, and his Spoils divided.

Our Saviour goes on, and tells his Disciples, *I have yet many things*

(i) *Ephes. 6. 12.* (k) *2 Tim. 2. 26.*
 (l) *Luk. 11. 22.*

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things to say to you; but you cannot bear them now. There are many Heavenly Truths, which contradict and mortifie our Earthly Inclinations: And these are heavy Crosses to us, we are not able to *bear* them, till our Hearts are fill'd with that Celestial Love which makes us value Heaven far above Earth. But *however, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he guides us into the Love of all these Truths,* which are the Divine Lessons of Infinite Wisdom and Eternal Love; the Lessons which the *Word Incarnate* and the *Holy Ghost* conspire to Teach us, the One informing our Mind, and the other instructing our Heart. The *Doctrine* is always the same, as well when we only *believe* it, as when we also *love* it. And to satisfy the Apostles in this Point, concerning the perfect Harmony of *his* and *the Comforter's* Doctrine, our Saviour told them, *When the Spirit of*

Truth is come, he will not Speak to you, or Teach you, as of Himself, but whatsoever he shall have heard or receiv'd from my Father and Me, That he will Speak; and in the Truth of that he will instruct you, by making you sincerely love it, and by guiding you into a firm Belief of it. He will glorifie me, because he will teach my Doctrine. The same Wisdom which I derive from my Father, the same the Holy Ghost derives from both of us, and with the same he will enlighten and inflame you. My Father's Doctrine is mine: All things that my Father has, are mine: And therefore you may be assured, that when the Comforter comes, he will take of my Father's Doctrine and mine, and will tell it to you. He will take of mine, because he will take what I have Preach'd, and tell you how to Practise it. He will tell you things to come, and speak them

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them as effectually to your Hearts, as to your Understandings. I have told you these *things to come*, and they trouble you: But *when he comes*, he will teach you to *love* these very things which now you are so griev'd to think of, and then they'll trouble you no more; but on the contrary, you will (m) *rejoyce* at the very Thought of being *counted worthy to suffer for my Name.*

O God, who by the infinite Perfection of thy Being, art the Center of All Unity, and who not only giv'st us leave to call Thee *Our Father which art in Heaven*, but also hast been mercifully pleas'd to send thy *Only Son* and *Holy Spirit*, to unite the Minds and Hearts of all thy Faithful People here on Earth; Grant, we most humbly beseech Thee, that we may be so in

F 4

Love

(m) *Acts* 5. 41.

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Love with thy Commands, and so desirous of thy Promises, that from the Various Changes and Vicissitudes of Temporal Affairs, and from the Shortness, the Inconstancy, and the Deceitfulness, of all our Worldly Comforts, we may learn to fix our Hearts immoveably upon that Only Blessed Place where True Joys are Unchangeable and Everlasting. *Amen.*

Discourse V.

Of the Devil's great Power over Sinners.

JESUS was casting out a Devil, and it was Dumb. And when the Devil was gone out, the Dumb Man spoke, and the People wonder'd. But some of them said, He casts out Devils by Beelzebub the Prince of Devils. And others tempting him de-

demanded of him a Sign from Heaven. But he knowing their Thoughts, said unto them, Every Kingdom divided against it self will be brought to Desolation, and a House against a House will fall. If therefore Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his Kingdom stand? Because ye say that I cast out Devils thro' Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out Devils, by whom do your Sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your Judges. But if I with the Finger of God cast out Devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong Man arm'd keeps his Palace, his Goods are in Peace. But if a stronger than he comes upon him, he will take away all his Armour wherein he trusted, and will divide his Spoils. He that is not with me, is against me: And he that gathers not with me, scatters. When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man, he walks through dry Places, seek-

ing rest; and finding none, he says, *I will return to my House whence I came out.* And when he comes, he finds it swept and garnish'd. Then goes he and takes to him Seven other Spirits more Wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there: And the last State of that Man is worse than the first. And it came to pass, whilst he was saying these things, a certain Woman of the Company raising her Voice said to him, *Blessed is the Womb that bore thee, and the Paps which thou hast suck'd.* But he said, *Blessed rather are they who hear the Word of God, and keep it.* Luk. 11. v. 14, to 29.

This Gospel lays before our Eyes two very important Considerations; 1. The sad Conditions of those Persons who are possess'd by the Devil; 2. The only Means by which 'tis possible to cast him out, and hinder his returning again.

I.

The very naming of a Person possess'd by the Devil, is enough to strike our Minds with horror. Being thus possess'd, is next to being damn'd. And such a Person, though he be not yet in Prison, is already in the Messenger's Hand. He does not go immediately to Hell; but Hell it self, in some degree, comes to him, instead of his going thither. Wheresoever the Devil is, he carries his Hell about him; wheresoever he comes, he brings it with him; and whatsoever Punishment God pleases to permit, the Devil never fails to inflict; there's nothing but God's Mercy that can stint his boundless Rage.

Before the coming of our Saviour, the World was almost universally given over to the Power of the Devil. Only some few
chosen

chosen Persons were exempted from his Jurisdiction ; those few, I mean, who believ'd the Promises of their Redemption, and lived conformably to their Belief. The Eternal Word of God, the Second Person of the Ever-blessed Trinity, (a) *was made Flesh, and dwelt amongst us* ; and, as S. Paul expresses, (b) *He took part of the same Flesh*, not only to live with us, but to lay his Life down for us, *that through Death he might destroy him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil*. We read in the *Acts* (c) how he went about doing Good, and healing all that were oppress'd by the Devil. Their Bodies were some of them, and their Souls were almost all of them oppress'd by him. And our Saviour therefore heal'd their Bodies, that he might afterwards make Way for the Recovery of their Souls ; and that

(a) *Joh. 1. 14.* (b) *Heb. 2. 14.* (c) *10. 38.*

that the miraculous Cure of the one, might be a Preparation of their Minds and Hearts for the more miraculous *Healing* of the other.

The Evils of our Body are visible; the others are in a Manner out of Sight, and therefore out of Mind: And this is one Reason why the Devil seems so Terrible when he enters the Body, and so Harmless when he possesses the Soul. We read in *S. Matthew*, (d) *how they brought unto Jesus those which were bodily possess'd with Devils, and he heal'd them:* But when their Souls were possess'd, we do not read what Care they took to have such People brought unto him to be heal'd. And yet the Soul being certainly beyond Comparison the better Part, 'tis manifest that, when the Devil has Possession of it, Man's Condition is incomparably worse. Our

Our present Gospel affords us an Example of each kind ; and in the first Place lays before our Eyes the sad Spectacle of a Man whose Body was possess'd by a *Dumb Devil*. We read that *Jesus was casting out a Devil, and it was Dumb*. It had already enter'd the Man's Body, taken Possession of his Tongue, and being Master of it, would neither speak for him, nor let him speak for himself. He must of Necessity have been Speechless as long as the Devil was there : But *when the Devil was gone out, the Dumb Man spoke, and the People wonder'd*. And here I will not enquire what Reasons they had to think the Devil was in him, or by what Signs they had a certain Knowledge of it : I shall only observe that no natural Cause of the like Effect, would have mov'd the People's Hearts to such Compassion, or have struck their Minds with so much Terrour and Astonishment.

nishment. We do not read of any Pains or Torments that the poor Man suffer'd, but only that the Evil Spirit made him *Dumb*: But however, the very Notion of a Devil being broken Loose, and being personally Present in a human Body, with an invilible Warrant to Arrest it, the Tenour of which we are not like to know but by the Execution; all this put together has a much more horrible Aspect, than if the same Effect proceeded from a natural Cause. And therefore, when a Man would fain speak, and cannot because the *Devil* possesses his *Body*, we are strangely afrighted and amaz'd to see it. But when a Man can speak, and will not, even in those Cases where his Conscience obliges him to speak the Truth, praise God, ask Mercy, own his Fault, declare his Neighbour's Innocence, and the like: In these Occasions, the *Dumb Devil* has possess'd the
very

very *Soul* of him; and few, or none, take Notice of it, although the Reasons of our Terrour and Amazement are much greater. In the first Case, we are apt to wonder what great *Sin* could be the Cause of such a heavy Judgment upon him; whereas, for ought we know, 'twas (e) *neither the Man had sinn'd, nor his Parents, but only that the Works of God should be made manifest in him.* But in the second Case, when the *Soul* it self is possess'd, we may be sure the *Man* himself *has sinn'd*, and grievously too; for nothing less than a Mortal Sin can make the Devil Master, and give him any Possession there.

For my Part, were it lawful for me to guess at what I cannot know, I should rather believe the *Dumb* Man was an honest and upright Person, a lover of Sincerity and Truth. And indeed, if we

(e) *Jo. 9. 3.*

we take it for granted, that it was not God's express Command but only his Permission, I cannot easily conceive to what purpose the Devil should delight in taking Possession of his Tongue ; unless it were that he foresaw the Man would make good Use of it, and speak with Piety and Charity, with Moderation and Discretion, if he had been Master of it. Had he foreseen he would have used his Tongue as others did, he never would have wisht to Silence him. Had he discover'd in his Heart that Store of Envy, Pride, and Malice, which others so much abounded with, he would soon have quitted his Tongue to take Possession of his Soul. Good God ! What Malice, Pride, and Envy, must their Hearts abound with, who could Vomit forth such Blasphemy in presence of the Saviour of the World ! *He casts out Devils by the Power of Beelzebub the Prince of Devils.*
(This

This Prince of Devils surely must have been the Sovereign Lord and Sole Possessor of their Souls: He must have been the Absolute Master of their Minds, to make them entertain the thought of it; and no less Master of their Hearts, to make them willingly and wilfully believe it. Nothing but the utmost height of Malice could have said it: And nothing but Goodness it self could have answered it, with such Humility and Meekness? Our Saviour shews them,
1. How unlikely it was, that *Satan* should lend him his Power against his own Interest; his *Kingdom* would be desolate, his *House* would fall, it could not possibly stand, if *Satan* were divided against himself. 2. How unreasonable it was to say, he did it by the Devil's Power, when they verily believ'd their own Sons did it by the Power of God.

God. There were some amongst themselves, who used to cast out Devils in the Name of the God of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*: And nothing but downright Malice could in this Occasion ascribe the same Effect to any other Power. *If I by Beelzebub cast out Devils,* says our Saviour, *by whom do your Sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your Judges;* that is, your Opinion of them shall rise in *judgment* against you, and your own Conscience shall condemn you of being Partial, one Way, and Malicious, the other.

The more I consider the whole Matter, the more fully I am persuaded that the blind Devil was incomparably the worse of the two. The *Dumb Devil* did very little Harm to the Man's Body, and none at all to his Soul: But the *Blind One* plung'd their very Souls into the blackest and deepest Abyss of Sin and Darknes. S.

Paul

Paul says, (f) if the Gospel be hid, 'tis only to them whom the God of this World has blinded : And certainly never were mortal Men more blinded by the God of this World, than these unreasonable People were. For what could *Christ* do more, to convince them of his being the *Messias*, than to work Miracles to this Purpose? What greater Assurance could they wish for, than to be Eye-witnesses of them? If, when these Miracles were plainly done before their Eyes, they were resolv'd to say the Devil did them, who could help it? If, when they verily believ'd the Devil was cast out, they still would say, the Devil did it, rebell'd against himself, and turn'd himself out of Doors in spite of his own self; was not this to out-face the Noon-day-Sun, and Vote it to be only the Noon of Night?

(f) 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.

Night? Our Saviour added, *if I with the Finger of God cast out Devils*, if my Power be Divine, *no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you*, that is, the *Messias* is come. And this was the very thing they could not endure to think of. They hated the Light, and therefore shut their Eyes against it. So Worldly and Proud they were, that when they saw a poor and humble *Messias* take upon him to be the Saviour whom they had so long expected, their Hearts were ready to burst with Malice and Envy against him: And therefore, let him say or do what he pleas'd, they could not (because they would not) believe him. The Miracle was evidently done before their Faces; they knew not how to deny it: But *some of them* imputed it to the Devil; and *others* tempting him demanded of him a *Sign from Heaven*, which if it had been granted, they would have

have said the (g) *Prince of the Air* had done it. When God has done one undeniable Miracle, this One is as good as a Thousand. For if God can possibly equivocate with us, and deceive us in any one Instance, he may as well do it in Ten Thousand if he pleases. Alas! They only waved this Miracle, because they knew not what to say to it; and demanded another in Hopes of having something more to say against it. Such shifts will Sinners make, to avoid the odious Light of Truth. When they cannot escape it one Way, they try another, and another; and instead of (b) *resisting the Devil*, they do all they can, to help him to deceive them. What wonder is it therefore, if he leads them Blindfold whereso'ere he pleases?

We must be strangely Stupid indeed, if we can seriously consider

sider this, without applying it to our selves. 'Tis the common Case of all Sinners ; and therefore may perhaps concern us much more nearly than we are aware of. Any one Mortal Sin is enough to exclude God from our Souls : And in the very Moment that God leaves his Throne, the Devil never fails to usurp it. When *Judas* resolv'd to Sell his Master, the Scripture says, (i) *the Devil put it into his Heart to betray him.* And the same thing always happens to us when first we fully and deliberately consent to any mortal Sin. He (k) *enters into us*, he takes possession of our Souls ; and *puts* what he pleases *into our Minds and Hearts.* We may say perhaps, to Comfort our selves, we have confess'd our Sins, and we have been absolved : And this indeed is very well, provided we have been sincerely

(i) *Jo.* 13. 2. (k) *ib.* v. 27.

sincerely Penitent : But alas ! We all of us know well enough that, without sincere Repentance, all the rest is nothing but meer Sacrilege, and so much worse than nothing. If our Sins are forgiven us, All's well ; the *Devil* is then *cast out* of us ; and the *Kingdom of God* undoubtedly is *come upon us*. But how shall we do to know it ? We may possibly have good Hopes : But as for Certainty, 'twould lead us to Presumption, and therefore we ought not to desire it. The best Way we can take, to have our Hopes well grounded, is to be continually watchful, not in examining scrupulously our past Life, but in observing all our present Behaviour, and in taking Care that the main Body of our Actions, and our whole Course of Living, may chiefly aim at Heaven, If the Cares and Pleasures of this World possess the chief Place in our Hearts, we have
Reason

Reason to Tremble at what we read in Scripture, where the Devil is call'd the (l) *Prince of this World*, the Prince of all those who are Worldly-minded; and (m) *the Ruler of the Darkneſs of this World*, the Ruler of those who love the Works of Darkneſs. Our Saviour himſelf aſſures us, that (n) *All thoſe who commit Sin, are the Servants or Slaves of Sin*; they do the deeds of their Father; they are of their Father the Devil: And S. Paul in his ſecond Epistle to Timothy ſuppoſes that the Devil is their Lord and Maſter, when he tells us, (o) *they are Captives at his Pleaſure.*

II.

This Character of a Sinner, I muſt confeſs, is very Terrible: But ſince 'tis true, and the

G Word

(l) *Jo. 12. 31.* (m) *Eph. 6. 12.*
 (n) *Jo. 8. 34, 44.* (o) *2. 26.*

Word of God himself is pleas'd to teach us the Truth of it, I see no Reason why it is not fit that we should know it. The more sensible we are of our Misery, the more vigorously and more effectually we endeavour to rescue our selves from it; and this is certainly the best and most desirable Effect of Knowledge.

The only Means by which 'tis possible to deliver our selves from the Slavery of Sin, and cast *the Devil out* of us, is to follow the Counsel of *S. James* by (p) *submitting our selves to God*, with all our Heart, with all our Soul, with all our Mind, with all our Strength: With all these we must resist *the Devil*, and he will flee from us: With all these we must draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to us. If we are not with him, we are against him; and if we gather not with him,

him, we scatter. We must therefore (q) humble our selves in his Sight, and he will lift us up: He (r) gives his Grace to the humble: And let our Weakness be never so Great, he is ready to give more Grace; let the evil Spirit be never so Strong in us, if we use our utmost Endeavours, we shall find by joyful Experience that the Spirit of God is always stronger than he.

When a strong Man arm'd keeps his Palace, his Goods are in Peace. The Devil is here compar'd to a Man that is strong and arm'd: And the Comparifon is dreadful (at least it ought to be so) to a Sinner who is Weak and Naked. The Devil's Palace is the Heart of a Sinner. 'Tis there he gives what Orders he pleases; and there it is that he is punctually obey'd. As long as he commands there, his Authority is absolute: Our

G 2 Passions,

Passions, Inclinations, and Humour's, are his faithful and well-beloved Subjects : And *his Goods are in Peace*, because he meets with little or no Resistance. *But if a stronger than he comes upon him*, if the Spirit of God himself be pleas'd to undertake the great and glorious Work of our Deliverance, he will not fail to *Conquer him*, he will be sure to *take away all his Armour, wherein he trusted, and will divide his Spoils.*

The greatest Saint is capable of Sinning. He that stands, and for a long Time has already stood, is liable to many Dangers of falling : And if he ever be so wretched as to fall into one mortal Sin, the Fruits of all his Labours, all his Vertues, and good Actions, all are lost. The Devil is his Conquerour ; he takes Possession of his Soul, he rifles and plunders all the Treasures of it, which are now the doleful *Spoils* of his Victory, and dismal *Trophies*

phies of his Triumph. The Prophet *Ezekiel* declares, that *(s)* *when the righteous Man commits Iniquity, all the Righteousness which he has formerly done, shall not be so much as mention'd in his Eternal Accounts; it shall not be remember'd to his Advantage; it shall avail him no more than if 'twere utterly forgotten. Such is the sad Condition of a Sinner! But however, if once the Spirit of God returns, to take Possession of his Soul, and reassume the Government of it, He will divide the Devil's Spoils; and whatsoever was lost by Sin, will certainly be recover'd by sincere Repentance. Such is the happy Condition of an humble Penitent!*

But here again we must consider seriously the Doctrine of the Gospel. We must not rashly flatter our selves that all is well with

G 3

us;

us ; that the Devil is *conquer'd* ; and that his *Spoils* are *divided* ; unless we find great Signs and Tokens of a sincere and universal Amendment. *All his Armor wherein he trusted*, must be *taken away*. If any Part of it remain, if it be not *all* gone, the Devil is still the Usurper, the Possessor, and the Tyrant of our Souls. His *Arms*, or Weapons, are our wicked Inclinations and inordinate Affections. With these he Fights against us ; with these he Wounds and Kills the very Souls of us ; with these he Conquers and Enslaves us. Our irregular Love of Pleasures, our immoderate Desire of Riches, and our foolish Pride of Life, these are the *Arms* with which he overcomes us, and makes us (t) *Captives at his Pleasure*. Are *all* these taken away ? Is our Pride gone ? Are we contented with being undervalued

(t) 2 Tim. 2. 26.

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valued, slighted, and affronted? Is our Covetousness banisht from us? Our Minds and Hearts are they resign'd to Providence, and willing to embrace that Poverty for God's Sake which he himself was pleas'd to endure for ours? The usual Fondness of our Ease and Humour has it quite forsaken us? Does our own Experience convince us of it, by a secret Satisfaction which we find in every little Cross which he is pleas'd to send us, who died upon the Cross to save us? Is all this true? Can we lay our Hand upon our Heart, and truly say, we find great Comfort in believing, and great Confidence in hoping that it is so?

If we can; we are, so far, Happy. But we must not stop here. We must not sit down quietly in a lazy Enjoyment of our Happiness. If we do, we shall soon be Miserable again: Our second Misery will be much

greater than the first : And our Relapse will be more Terrible, and much more Dangerous than the Disease. Our *Enemy* is not *Dead*, though we have cast him out of Doors : His *Strength* continues, although we have disarm'd him. *When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man*, his Rage redoubles his Strength. He seeks for rest, and cannot find it. He walks through dry Places : And indeed all other Places are dry to him, who cannot meet with any thing to quench the Thirst of his insatiable Revenge. He therefore endeavours to return to the House from whence he came. When first he comes, to try if he can find Admittance, he finds it swept, and garnish'd : He finds it partly Empty, and in some readiness to receive him ; but, yet not quite abandon'd by God's Holy Spirit : There's no Room for him yet. The Resolutions of a sincere Penitent are always strong enough to

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to hold out for some little Time. But alas ! How little is it ! A Year, a Month, a Week, perhaps, may be enough to cool the Heat, and abate the Vigour of our Pious Resolutions : And when we little suspect it, when we are the least upon our Guard, and most exposed to Danger, then it is that the Devil, whose Malice never sleeps, *takes to him Seven other Spirits more Wicked than himself* ; they enter into us, and dwell in the very Hearts of us ; and therefore 'tis no wonder if our *last State* be a great deal *worse than the first.*

Thus does our Blessed Redeemer, the Word Incarnate, plainly and familiarly instruct us, as it were in our own Language, by such Metaphors as are accommodated to our low Conceits, and proper to awaken us into a serious Consideration of our Danger, and the Means to avoid it. If the Devil's Hatred be so Vigilant

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lant and Indefatigable to destroy us, ought not True Self-love to be as watchful and as busie to prevent him? If when He's *conquer'd* and *cast out*, He then returns with seven times more Strength and Fury to attack us, ought not we with seven times more Zeal and Diligence endeavour, daily and hourly, to improve in all those Christian Vertues, which we know are Necessary to resist him? And yet we seem to fancy that the Work of our Salvation is no more than one Day's Labor. When once the whole Devotion of the Penitential Day is over, we presume we have no more to do; we live as idly and as unconcern'dly, as if all were done: Although God knows (and if we believe the Gospel, we may know it too) our principal and most laborious Task is still behind. 'Tis easier to make our Peace, than to maintain it. He that falls must take great Care

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Care to rise : But (u) *he that stands must take a great deal more Care lest he fall.*

Blessed are they who hear these Truths, and make it their chief Business to take Warning by them. As much as the *Soul* is better than the *Body*, so much more *Blessed* is the *Heart* in which the *Word of God* takes *Root*, than was the *Womb* in which the *Word* took *Flesh*. Our Saviour does not blame the *Woman* who rais'd her *Voice* that all the *Company* might hear her say, *Blessed is the Womb that bore thee* : But from the Truth of what she said, he took the Advantage of inferring and declaring a greater and much more important Truth, *Blessed rather are they who hear the Word of God, and keep it.*

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(u) 1 Cor. 10. 12.

Discourse VI.

*Of disengaging our Heart from
this World, and the Danger
of deferring this Duty.*

WHen Jesus was come near Jerusalem, beholding the City he wept over it, saying, If thou didst but know, at least in this thy Day, the things which belong unto thy Peace. But now they are hid from thy Eyes. For the Days shall come upon thee, that thy Enemies shall cast a Trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side; and shall lay thee even with the Ground, and thy Children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one Stone upon another: Because thou didst not know the Time of thy Visitation. And he went into the Temple, and began to cast out them that Sold therein, and them that Bought, saying

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saying to them, My House is the House of Prayer, but you have made it a Den of Thieves. And he taught daily in the Temple. Luk. 19. v. 41, to 47.

This Gospel teaches us two Things ; our Duty, and the Danger of deferring it. It teaches us how great a Crime it is to Neglect our Duty ; and how fatal the Consequence is of despising so great a Danger : A Crime so great that it deserv'd our Saviour's Indignation ; a Danger so fatal that it moved his Tears.

I.

We read in the Gospel, that our Saviour *taught them daily in the Temple.* He did so then, in Person ; and now he still continues to do so, by his Ministers who represent him. But in the same Gospel we read, that when *he went into the Temple,* before he began to *teach* in it, he first *be-*
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gan to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; and in S. John we read, that (a) he made a Scourge of small Cords, drove them all out of the Temple, pour'd out the Changers Money, and overthrew the Tables, saying, Take these things from hence, and make not my Father's House a House of Merchandise. If we had then been Living, if we had been Present, and had seen our Saviour do these things, we should perhaps have thought him to have been in no small Passion: But the Disciples who better understood the Heavenly Temper of their Divine Master, remembered it was written, *The Zeal of thy House has devour'd me*; they remembered, and concluded that it was not Passion but Zeal that moved him to use his Authority, and drive them out of the Temple. His Indignation was as kind
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(a) Jo. 2.v. 15, 16, 17.

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and merciful, as it was just and reasonable. Altho' the Crime was Great and Sacrilegious, altho' himself was Lord and Master of the Place and of their Persons too, altho he had the Sovereign Power and Supreme Authority to punish them as they deserv'd, he did not command the Earth to open under them, and swallow them Alive, but only, *of small Cords*, he *made a Scourge* to *drive them out* : And all this lesser Punishment was kindly intended, only to prevent a greater. We are strangely mistaken in our Notions of the Deity, if we imagine that God is therefore Angry at our Sins, because they do him Harm ; or that he is therefore Pleas'd with Vertuous Actions, because they do him Good : Alas !
(b) *When we have done our best, we are unprofitable Servants ; and even when we do our worst, our boldest*

boldest Insolence, which strikes most fiercely and most impiously at his Majesty, is never able to reach him. He is Angry at our Sins, as a tender Parent is Angry at a giddy Child which falls and hurts it self: The greater Harm the Child receives, the more the Parent is Displeas'd and Angry at the Fall, and at the Negligence which was the Occasion of it. And thus in our present Gospel we observe, that Christ is Angry at the Buying and Selling in the Temple, and yet he *Weeps* over the City: He is Angry at the Harm they do themselves, and Weeps to think what they are like to suffer for it; in a Word, he hates the Sin and loves the Sinner, or rather, he hates the one because he loves the other. And here I cannot but admire God's Goodness and our Wretchedness; how Kind he is in Correcting us, how Patient in Expecting us; and, on the contrary, how miserably

ferably Ungrateful we are, who are never the better for his Correction, and a great deal worse for his Patience.

When we survey the World, and view the Situation of Ecclesiastical Affairs, if we have any Spark of that true Zeal which ought to warm our Hearts, we cannot without Indignation behold how many there are, who, like the Buyers and Sellers in the Temple, make our *Father's House* a *House of Merchandise*, and change the *House of Prayer* into a *Den of Thieves*. There are still some few true Ministers of *Christ*, who, like their Master, are *daily teaching in the Temple*: But alas! It signifies little or nothing, whilst the Buyers and Sellers are there, who having something else to do than to attend to what is taught, will neither mind it themselves nor suffer any body else to mind it. Such People as these have nothing to do with Religion, any further

further than it serves to cover their Interest: And if ever they come into the Temp'le, 'tis only that they may buy and sell under the Roof of it. They magnifie the Precepts of Religion, because they reap Advantage by it; they cry it up, because they are not safe without it; and after all their outward Profession of it, their Actions plainly prove, they value it almost as little as they practice it. These are the great and shameful Scandals of Religion, which, by the daily Practice of Atheism, have almost fool'd the Wits of our Age into a vain Belief of it. These growing Scandals every Day encrease, and deserve a *Scurge* of greater Cords than ever.

But why do we thus delight in the ill-natured Pleasure which we find in censuring the Faults and Follies of our Neighbour's? It commonly has this Mischievous Consequence, that
whilst

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whilst we think how Bad they are, it hinders us from thinking how Good we ought to be ; and tempts us to conclude, that as long as others are worse, we need not be better, than we are. The Publick Profanations of God's Temple, make our private Sacrileges easily escape our Observation. We forget that we are every one of us (c) *the Temple of the Living God ; as God himself has said ; if we love him above all things, he will dwell in us, and walk in us ; he will dwell in us, by the particular Presence and Assistance of his Holy Spirit, and walk in us, by making us walk in the Ways of all his Commandments ; and upon these Terms he declares, that he will be our God, and we shall be his People.* Such Honours and Advantages are very Great : And yet of these we are as unmindful,
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(c) 2 Cor. 6. 16

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as if we knew nothing of them. *Know you not*, says S. Paul (d) *that you are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any Man defile the Temple of God, him God shall destroy.* And lest we might presume to escape this terrible *Destruction*, he goes on; *Let no Man*, says he, *deceive himself: If any Man among you seems to be Wise in the World, if any Man pretends to be too Wise to believe these things, let him be a Fool in the Eye of Man, that he may be Wise in the Sight of God: Let him be Fool enough to despise this World, and Wise enough to love God above all things: Let him remember that a Christian is a Scholar of Christ; that he is to learn his Duty, not from the World, but from the Master of it; and that his first Instruction is to drive the Buyers and Sellers out of his Heart, that*
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(d) 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17, 18.

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he may make it a *House of Prayer*, a *House of Adoration*, *Supplication*, and *Thanksgiving*.

Our Heart is the Only *Temple* where God is Adored (e) in *Spirit and in Truth*. When we are in Church, if our Heart be in another Place, we may perhaps adore in outward Appearance, but we do not *worship in Spirit*, nor consequently in *Truth*. Of all the Ten Commandments the First is that which enjoins the *Worship of our Lord our God*, and *Service of him Only* (f) *with all our Heart, with all our Soul, with all our Mind*; and this we never do, but when we love him above all things. He (g) *does not dwell in Temples made with Hands, nor is he worshipp'd with Mens Hands*. It is not the *Lifting of our Hands*, it is the *Raising of our Hearts to Heaven*:
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(e) *Jo. 4. 24.* (f) *Mat. 22. 37.*
(g) *Acts 17. 24, 25.*

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Lift up your Hearts to God our Lord: This is Divine Worship. And therefore we ought to be as Jealous of *loving* Creatures, as we are of *Worshipping* them. Whatever we love has a Place in our Heart: The Favourite Object, which we love above all others, has its Place upon the Altar: And, if this be God, All's well; but, if a Creature, we are wretched Idolaters. Our Heart being thus our *Temple*, if we introduce any Creatures into it (as we always do, when we love them) we must not do it otherwise than as we invite our Friends to go to Church with us; which is not, that we may worship them, or they may worship us, but only that we and they may join our Prayers and Endeavours for each other, in one Supreme Worship of God alone, who is the only Sovereign Object of our Hope and Love. So far as an inferiour Worship is allowable to Creatures,

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tures, so far we may afford them an inferiour Love: But then this Love must still be Relative; it must imply a Reference to him, who, as he is essentially the Center of all Unity, all Truth, all Being, so he ought to be the Center of all Love. Whatsoever Creatures challenge our Best Love, and claim the Chief Place in our Hearts, our Inordinate Affections to them are Buyers and Sellers, who drive a miserable Trade of buying the Shadow and selling the Substance of our Happiness, buying our Sins and selling our Souls, buying Hell and selling Heaven; which, in Effect, is selling All we have, and All we hope, for Nothing here, and infinitely worse than Nothing hereafter.

I have already observ'd that before our Saviour *taught in the Temple*, he *began to cast the Buyers and Sellers out of it*: And for want of minding well this first Instruction,

Instruction, we fail in all the rest. We begin at the wrong End, and therefore never succeed. We begin with endeavouring to improve the Love of God ; and this, I must confess, is the best thing we can do ; but it is not the first to be done. Perhaps you'll say, 'tis no great Matter, how much we love his Creatures, provided we love God more. You might as well have said, 'tis no great Matter how Cold we are, provided we are as Warm as we need be. The inconsistency is Obvious to every Body's common Sense. The Excessive Cold must of Necessity be driven out, or else there cannot be found room enough for Necessary Heat : And the Irregular Love of Creatures must be banisht from our Heart; before the Love of God can govern it. We must first drive out all those inordinate Loves, which are the Occasions of offending God. Whatsoever
Love

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Love so strongly inclines us to offend him, that it commonly prevails, and gains the Victory over us; 'tis no Matter, what the thing is in it self; we certainly love it too much: We love it better than we love our Duty, and that's a great deal too much. And tho' perhaps such Loves, if Moderate, might possibly be Innocent; yet, such as they are, their Excess makes them Criminal, and brings them under a Necessity of being driven out. But how shall we do, to get rid of them? I confess, it is not so easie a Task as I could wish it: It requires more Time and Pains than many are willing to employ about it: And this confirms what I proposed to speak of, in the second Place; because the harder it is to perform our Duty, the greater is the Danger of deferring it.

II.

If it were impossible to be done, it would not be our Duty to do it ; nor would there be any Danger of our being Punisht for deferring it. But the thing is very possible, though it be very hard. Our Reason was not given us, because it is impossible to use it ; but because it would have been impossible to govern our Selves without it. Neither was it given to destroy our Natural Inclinations, but only to keep them in good Order, and confine them to those Measures which are best and fittest for our Nature. It is not to be expected, that a Man Uneasie, Hungry, Thirsty, Weary, or Afflicted, should not have an Inclination to Diversion, Meat, Drink, Rest, or Comfort. We cannot Live without the natural Supports of Humane Life ; and these we cannot

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not purchase without Money or Friends : And therefore 'tis not only Natural but Reasonable for us to have some Regard, and even Inclination, to our Honour, Interest, and Pleasure, in a moderate Degree, as far as they are Necessary to support us in our Way, and lead us to our End.

As long as our Love of all these things is Sober and Temperate, so long 'tis Natural and Reasonable. If we do not love them for themselves ; if we value them only for the Sake of that great End for which we are created ; if we make their proper Usefulness the only Measure of our Inclination to them ; we act according to the Fundamental Principles of Nature and Right Reason. But when once we grow so Wanton as to run into Excess, and fall in Love with the *Means*, without regarding, as we ought, the *End* of all these things, our Passions then are Buyers and Sellers, with

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a Witness: They abandon the Hopes of Heaven to purchase the Enjoyments of this World, and *sell* the one to *buy* the other. These Passions grow Habitual; they daily gain new Strength; and the oftner and longer we indulge them, the deeper they are rooted in the very Hearts of us. How strongly and how deeply they are fixt, we never know till we begin to (b) *strive for the Mastery*; and then we find it is not the Work of an imperfect Resolution on a sudden, but requires both Time and Pains to conquer and subdue them. They grew upon us by degrees; and, without a Miracle, they are not to be overcome, but by degrees. We often follow'd their Suggestions, and every repeated Act encreas'd their Strength: And therefore we must now as often accustom our selves to a resolute and vigorous

(b) 1 Cor. 9. 25.

vigorous Resistance, which proportionably may abate and weaken them.

For want of this, our Purposes are generally Fruitless. We often resolve to amend ; we think we are Sincere ; we take the Sacrament upon it : And that we may do it *with a quiet Conscience*, we go to *God's Minister*, to open to him our Grief ; we confess our Sins, that we may receive not only *Ghostly Counsel and Advice*, but also *the Benefit of Absolution*. Yet all this comes to Nothing : We receive the *Counsel* without Effect, and the *Absolution* without Benefit : We immediately relapse into the same Sins again ; because we love the immediate Causes and Occasions of them as much as ever , and do not banish from our Heart all those inordinate Affections to these things, which thus Betray and Ruin us. We should never have Sinn'd, if we had not been too

Fond of the imaginary Concernments of our Honour, Interest, and Pleasure. And we should never fall again into the Self-same Sins, if we did not retain the same irregular Inclinations to these empty and unsatisfying things. Let us therefore now employ our utmost Industry to disengage our selves, and set our Hearts at Liberty. We formerly consider'd nothing but their gaudy Allurements: Let us now look through the Varnish, and see beyond it; let us study the real Defects, which have been so long cover'd under these deceitful Appearances; let us perpetually Check our fond Propension to them, by considering their Folly, Shortness, Vanity, Deceitfulness, and the innumerable Mischiefs which they do us here, besides the Eternal Miseries in which they involve us hereafter. We cannot be sincerely sorry for our Sins, unless we hate them: Nor
can

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can we hate them, unless we hate the Occasions of them: And therefore we must never rest till we have workt our Nature into such a Christian Temper, that we may despise and hate these things hereafter, as much as ever we esteem'd and lov'd them heretofore.

How hard a Task this is, they only know who have sincerely tried it, and persever'd in their Duty. But, alas! How few are these! The generality of Christians never offer at it: And others, who sometimes venture to set a Hand to it, no sooner feel the Difficulty of it, but they let it fall as hastily as if it burnt their Fingers. Because they find 'tis very hard to do it now, they therefore resolve to defer it till it be a great deal harder; and because it will at last be hardest of all, therefore they resolve to put it off to the last. They would not for the World, continue in their

Sinful Course, if they were sure to be damn'd for it : No, by no Means ; they would not Sin any more, if they did not hope to repent. Which is as much as to say ; because they hope, one Day, to Curse the Time that ever they Sinn'd, therefore they now Sin on ; and because they hope, they shall be Wise enough, at last, to hate these very Sins, therefore they now are Fools enough to be so very Fond of them. Others pretend they are so full of Business, they have not Time at present, to undertake so difficult a Task. But let me beg them to consider ; as busie as they are, if any mortal Sicknes overtakes them in the midst of their Business, they must, whether they will or no, find Time to Die ; and therefore they had best find Time to prepare for it. When their Body is Sick, they can willingly lay aside their other Business ; they can Retire to their Chamber,

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Chamber, and find Time enough to apply themselves to their Recovery. Their Soul is more Sick than their Body, and more Valuable too; and therefore they may very well allow more Care and Leisure to recover it.

Such Thoughts as these, and Thousands more, and better, God himself is often pleas'd to inspire us with. From Time to Time he invites us, and in the secret of our Hearts discourses these Matters with us, inviting us to Repentance, by Threats, and Promises, and kind Expostulations, and all the endearing Ways of Infinite Goodness and Mercy. And therefore, if, like *Jews*, we slight the Advantages of his Visits, if we deferr from Time to Time the only Necessary Work we have before us, we may justly expect to perish as they did, because, like them, we *did not know the Time of our Visitation*; we did not value it, we took no

Notice of it, we Behaved our selves as if we *did not know* it. Our Saviour thus Expostulates with that ungrateful City ; (i) *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gather'd thy Children together, even as a Hen gathers her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not ! And do not we justly deserve the same Reproach ? How often has he visited our Hearts ? How often has he inspired us with good Thoughts ? How often would he have gather'd us under the Wings of his Mercy, and we would not, we absolutely would not accept it ?* (k) *Behold,* says he, *Your House shall be left unto you Desolate ; I shall not hereafter frequent it ; I shall only visit it once more ;* (l) *You shall not see me henceforth, till you shall say,* (m) *Blessed is the King that comes*
in

(i) *Mat. 23. 37.* (k) *v. 38.* (l) *v. 39.* (m) *Luk. 19. 38.*

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in the Name of the Lord. This
happen'd at his last Solemn Entry
into *Jerusalem*; when as we
read in our present Gospel, *behold-*
ing the City, he wept over it. He
wept to think, this Visit was the
last; and that the last would be
as much in vain as all the rest.
He wept over it, saying, If thou
didst but know at least in this thy
Day, the things which belong unto
thy Peace; altho' thou hast been
hitherto so Obstinate in thy
Impenitence, so often abus'd
my Mercy, and so much pro-
vok'd my Patience, yet neverthe-
less if now *at least* thou wouldst
but heartily repent, behold thy
Peace *this very Day* is ready to be
sign'd: But alas! These things
are now *hid from thy Eyes*; thou
now art so habituated to the
Works of Darkness, that when
the Light shines bright upon
thee, thou canst not abide the
Sight of it, but wilfully shuttest
thy Eyes against it. For this
Reason

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Reason the Days shall come upon thee, that thy Enemies shall cast a Trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side; and shall lay thee even with the Ground, and thy Children within thee: And they shall not leave in thee one Stone upon another; because thou didst not know the Time of thy Visitation. Within less than Forty Years after, this Prophecy was literally verified: The City was taken, burnt, and levell'd with the Ground: And the Destruction of it, as it is related by Josephus, is the most lamentable that ever was described in any Authentick History.

This, I am very much afraid, is the Condition of all wicked Sinners, who deferr Repentance till they are upon their Death-Bed. Then it is that *the Days* are come upon them, in which their Body and their Mind are equally besieg'd, the one with
Sins,

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Sins, the other with Diseases, which cast as it were a Trench about them, compass them round, and keep them in on every side. Their famisht Resolutions, which only were the Children of their Brain, and not their Heart, are starved within them. All their Hopes are batter'd down, laid even with the Ground, and not so much as one Stone left upon another: And all this, because they deferr'd from time to time the Amendment of their Lives, and did not know the time of their Visitation.

In such a Case as this, I should be as fond of Comfort as my Neighbours; but the more I look for it, the less I hope to find it. I have often thought of the Good Thief, who lived a Sinner, and died a Saint; but when I rightly consider it, I cannot find the least appearance of any Comfort in it. This Thief was immediately reclaim'd, by the first
Visit

Visit of Divine Grace ; *he knew the time of his Visitation* : He did his Duty as soon as ever he knew it ; he obey'd his first Call from Heaven ; he was no sooner inspired with a Belief that *Christ* was the *Messiah*, but he presently confess'd his Faith in him, and begg'd his Pardon and Protection, even when the Disciples left him because they durst not own him. And this indeed may be some Comfort to all those, who never knew their Duty till they were upon their Death-Bed ; but as for those who knew it long before , were often minded of it, and never went effectually about it, it must rather be a Reproach, than any Comfort to them. Again , I sometimes have reflected on the Parable of the Vineyard , where (n) *They who were hired about the Eleventh Hour, receiv'd every Man a Penny, altho'*

(n) *Mat. 20. 9.*

tho' they (o) wrought but one Hour. And here, I own, if the last Hour of our Life were the first Hour of our being hired, we might have something to say for our selves; we might say, (p) no Man hired us before; as soon as we were hired, we fell to work, and persever'd working to the end, till (q) the Even was come. This was the plain Case of the Workmen in the Parable: But alas! 'Tis far from being theirs, who have been hired betimes, and often call'd upon, and yet would never mind their Work, but loiter'd till the Evening came. We do not read, that there were any such as these, who received a Penny, meerly because they began, at Night, to be a little sorry, that all the Day they had done nothing to deserve it.

The Conclusion of all this, is evident. If we desire to secure
our

(o) vers. 12. (p) v. 7. (q) v. 8.

our Salvation, we must not defer our Work till then; we must begin it now. We must immediately begin to (r) *Work our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*: And 'tis no matter how soon we begin to *fear and tremble*, provided we begin as soon to *work our Salvation with it*. Perhaps you'll say, you cannot abide to be thus frightened: That is to say, you cannot abide to do your Duty: Do it only; and the Excess of your Fear vanishes. But you are grievously afraid you shall not do it: That is, you fear you will not; for you are sure you shall, if you will.

But has not God promis'd Pardon to all Sinners, if they truly repent? He has undoubtedly. But what then? Will you therefore Sin on, upon that Score; and only repent, when
you

you die? Take care what you do: Your Pardon is not promis'd absolutely, but only with an *If*; and this *If* is a terrible one, if you well consider it. 'Tis *if* you *truly repent*; and this you cannot do without his Grace; and again, this Grace, in such Circumstances, is a thing he never promis'd you. But cannot he be better than Promise? Doubtless he can: And therefore, even then, you ought not to despair. He *can*; because he is Almighty: But this is a very slender Comfort to those dying Sinners, who have Thousands of Reasons to think he *will not*. We cannot know his *Will*, but by his *Word*; and he has nowhere given us his Word for it. As infinitely Good as he is, he never was yet so good as to promise that *he will*. On the contrary, he has shew'd himself a great deal more Good and Kind to Sinners, in frightening them
into

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into an Early Repentance, by threatening that *he will not*.

In the *Proverbs* we read, (f) *I have call'd you, says he, to Repentance, and you refused; you have despised all my Counsel, and slighted my Reproofs; therefore I also will laugh at your Ruin, when your Distress and Anguish come upon you. Then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear them: They shall not find me, because they did not fear me.* And again we read in *Ecclesiasticus*, (t) *Defer not thy Conversion to our Lord, put not off from Day to Day: For suddenly shall his Anger break forth, and thou shalt perish in the Day of Vengeance.* The Day of our Death will be a Day of Vengeance to us, if it surprize us unprepar'd. God's Anger will then break forth, and how suddenly we know not. But this we know, to our Sorrow, that

(f) *ch. i. v. 24, -- 29.* (t) *ch. 5. v. 7.*

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that so suddenly we shall perish,
if we defer our Conversion, and
put it off from Day to Day.

Away base World, false Friend,
and worst of Enemies, whose
Love is good for nothing but to
Damn us : What can it profit us,
to gain thee for a moment, and
lose our Souls for ever ? Grant,
O Father of Mercies, that we
thy Children may no longer be
so childish as we have been here-
tofore ; but that we may wisely
disengage our Heart from all the
Toys, the Bables, and the Play-
things of this World. Grant,
we humbly beseech Thee, that
we may (u) *this Day* begin to
hear thy Voice, and that we may
no longer *harden our Hearts*
against it, but immediately be-
gin, *this very Day*, for fear lest
To-Morrow may prove too late.

Con-

(u) Heb. 3. 15.

Conclusion.

The serious Thoughts and Resolutions of an Humble Penitent.

THE Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a certain King, who would take Account of his Servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him who owed him ten Thousand Talents. But because he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be Sold, his Wife and Children, and all that he had, and Payment to be made. But the Servant falling down at his Feet, worshipp'd him, saying, Lord, have Patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Whereupon the Lord of that Servant, being moved with Compassion, dismiss'd him, and forgave him the Debt. Mat. 18. 23, &c.

Never

Never was Picture more exact, and drawn more lively, than the Natural Description which our Gospel sets before us of God's Infinite Mercy. Some Strokes of Justice we may here and there observe; but these, like Shades well order'd, only help to make each Feature of his Mercy seem more Lovely, and more Divine. 'Tis certainly Just, that the *King of Heaven* should *take Account of his Servants*. It is not reasonable, that he who made the World, should therefore be worse serv'd because he made it. We all of us expect to be attended, and to have our Orders punctually obey'd. Upon the least Failure in any little Duty, we call our Servants to a strict Account. And why may not he do as much? And with as much more Reason, as his Wages and his Promises are greater?

When a Servant is brought to him, who owes him ten thousand Talents,

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Talents, is it not high time to begin to *Reckon* with him? Have we not Reason to admire his Patience, who stay'd so long, and let him run so far in his Ar-rears, before he took him to Task? Was it not kindly done, to allow him Leisure to reflect upon his Folly, that he might Repent, take better Measures for the future, and make some amends for all his past Extrava-gancies? And therefore, when all this Patience was found to be in vain, and all this kind For-bearance had been so long abused, that now his Servant *had not to Pay*, or to make any reasonable Satisfaction; it was but just, that *his Lord* should command him to be Sold, and all that he had, and Payment to be made.

Nor is it any Wonder, that the Servant, being frighted with the Apprehension of his being Sold, fell down immediately
at

at his Master's Feet, and worshipp'd him, saying, Lord, have Patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Alas! poor Creature! Ten Thousand Talents was too vast a Sum of Money, for him ever to be able to pay it. 'Twas easie enough to squander it away; but how was it possible to recover it? If he had *had* it to pay, he would have restor'd it, with all his Heart: But, because he *had* it not, his Heart was ready to break with Grief, to think that now he was upon the point of losing the best of Masters, and losing him for ever; and all this through his own most grievous Fault, his wilful Folly, and his foolish Wickedness, by which he had so insolently and ungratefully deserv'd it. Lord, says he, *have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.* Transported, as he was, with Fear and Grief to lose the happy Service of so good a Master, he talkt like one that knew

knew not what he said ; he never consider'd the impossibility of the thing, but ventur'd boldly to undertake and promise, more than he was able to perform. He could not *pay*, unless he had it : We read, *he had not to pay* : And how then could he *pay it* ?

A Sinner once guilty of a Mortal Sin, can never satisfy for it. All Mortal Sin is infinitely displeasing in the Sight of God ; and all that we are able to do, even by the Grace of *Christ*, co-operating *in us*, and *with us*, can never infinitely please him. We may do what we can ; and we can do no more : But all that we can do, even with the help of Grace, is far from being infinitely valuable, and therefore cannot atone for our Offences which are infinite ; nor for the Everlasting Penalties entail'd upon them, because they are inseparable in the Order of God's Justice,

Justice, and therefore no *Payment* can be made for one without the other.

But nevertheless when once we are truly humbled at the Feet of our Divine Master, and sincerely from the Bottom of our Heart resolve and promise, that we will pay all; that is, that we will do our utmost towards it; our willing Mind (a) is then accepted according to that we have, and not according to that we have not; that is, our Merciful God accepts our imperfect Abilities according to the largeness of our Heart, and not according to the Straitness of our Power; and what is infinitely wanting to us, is then abundantly supplied by a much better Hand, by Christ himself, whose Personal Merit being always Infinite, is enough to render us Acceptable, whensoever true Repentance and sincere Endeavours

(a) 2 Cor. 8. 12.

vours of Amendment make us capable of being recommended and protected by it.

Almighty and most Merciful God; behold a miserable Sinner prostrate at thy Feet; a wretchedly ungrateful Creature, every Way unjust; unjust to his Master, to himself, and to his Fellow-servants; unjust in Thoughts, in Words, in Actions; unjust throughout the whole Course of his Life, which has been all mis-spent in a continual Abuse of all thy Favours, always seeking nothing but the Satisfaction of his own unreasonable Humours, and neglecting nothing but those Christian Duties which thou art kindly pleas'd to call thy Honour and thy Service. *Ten Thousand Talents*, alas! are nothing to what he owes thee. *Ten Thousand Times*, and more, he has been furnisht with sufficient Opportunities and Helps to improve his Talents in thy Service: He might

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might have done it ; he ought ;
and yet he would not. Again,
Ten Thousand Times, and more,
he has not only omitted but trans-
gress'd the Obligation of thy
Laws ; those Laws which, right-
ly understood , are thy inesti-
mable Favours, mercifully in-
tended only to assist him, and ob-
lige him to be truly Happy in
thy Service : He might have been
so ; and was not ; because he
would not. All these grievous
and innumerable Crimes, by
which I have so much abused thy
Patience, lye so heavy on my
Thoughts, that (b) from the
Depth of my Affliction I am hard-
ly able to lift up my Voice, and
cry unto thee, O Lord, have Pa-
tience with me. All my Hope is in
thy Mercy, and in the plentiful
Redemption which is always with
thee. Thy Patience is Almighty,
and therefore I know thou canst
I 2 have

(b) Psal. 130.

have pity on me ; thy *Patience* is *All-merciful*, and therefore I *hope* thou *wilt*. Without the Assistance of thy Grace, I am not able to pay any thing ; and, even with it, I am not able to *pay all* : But yet if thy *Almighty Mercy* *will* forgive me *all* I cannot pay, I will be sure to pay thee *all* I can.

I have *believ'd* the World too much, altho' it ever deceiv'd me ; I have *hoped* in its Promises, altho' it always disappointed me ; I have *loved* it for its own Sake, and with a great deal of Passion, altho' it never could deserve it of me : And I must needs confess, it is a very inconsiderable Part of Payment, or rather none at all, if for the Future I *believe* and *hope* in thee alone, and *love* thee above all things. Alas ! All this I must have done, had I been always just and faithful to thee. *Ten Thousand Talents* owing to thee, are as many Reasons why I ought to love thee so much more. — One mortal Sin deprives me for ever,
of

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of all that's good and lovely in thee. The Pardon of one such Sin restores me to all my first blest Hopes, and therefore doubles the first Motive which I had to love thee. The second trebles it. And so the Motive rises, in Proportion to the Number of my Sins. And therefore, according to the common Laws of Gratitude, I have Reason to love thee now, Ten Thousand Times more than if I never had offended thee. (c) *Many Sins were forgiven to thy Servant Mary, because she loved thee much*: And is it not just that I should love thee so much more, because I hope so many more will be forgiven me?

Have Patience with me, O Lord, and I will, all the Days of my whole Life, endeavour to love thee more and more: Each Day shall be a Witness of my greater Diligence in doing what I can,

(c) Luk. 7. 47.

and greater Patience in *suffering* what thou pleasest. My Self-denials shall hereafter be as frequent, as my Sins were heretofore: I often will deny my self even those lawful *Satisfactions*, which would be more allowable, had I been always Innocent: And thus I daily will endeavour to follow the Example of thy Saints, especially those Penitents whose Love of thee inspired them with a Hatred of themselves, and a Desire of punishing their Sinful Inclinations because they had so much offended thee. The more my Inclinations are averse from Suffering, the more they feel its being Burdensome. My sluggish Nature, which had rather leave the Weight behind than carry the Advantage with it, is apt to throw the Burden down. And therefore, when my Neighbours are Injurious or Vexatious to me, I will henceforth thank kind Providence, for lending me their helping

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helping Hand, to lift it up again, and will endeavour to love them so much better, for being serviceable to me, where my Weakness has most need of it.

Such Resolutions as these, I know too well, are easier made, than kept; and easier broke, than made. I have, alas! too often, and too much, resembled that *Wicked Servant*, mention'd in thy Gospel, who immediately Forfeited his Master's Pardon, almost as soon as he obtain'd it. But being now, by sad Experience, more perswaded of my Weakness, and more *humbled* than I ever was before, I now have greater Hope in the Assistance of thy Grace, which thou refuseth always to the Proud, and grantest only to the *Humble*. Have Patience with me, O Lord, and I will pay thee all I can. Have Mercy on me, O God, according to thy great Mercy, and then thou wilt forgive me all I cannot pay thee.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

IN the First Part, page 29. line 10.
read to get. p. 163. l. 1. r. *the least*
part of our Labour, but for every little
l. 17. r. *Region of Trachonitis.* p. 183.
l. 12. r. *this.* l. 16. r. *grounded.* p. 185.
l. 8. r. *these.*

In the Second Part, page 4. line 9.
dele *that.* p. 6. l. 9. r. *let us.* p. 38. l.
43. r. *Women.* p. 128. l. 15. dele [?].



John & P. J. Nicholson